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ignposts Rocker and paddle switches Microwave components Roof and gutter heating cables Arson detection Voice amplifiers Fall arrest systems High-
ntry modules Custom broadband networks Steel threadable sprinkler pipe Accounting software Ultrasound cable assemblies Protective clothing for
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ubstations Extinguishing powders Contactless position sensors Electrosurgical generators Hospital blankets Modules and relays Terminal blocks F
rade trash bags Signal transducer cable harnesses DIN rail mount sockets Taper point sutures Sand filters Jacketed cable Deep-sea cable installations
Mechanical connectors Attic fire sprinklers Front end rectifiers for wireless applications Sealed valves Components for street lighting Fuel dispensing sys
xtension sets Pipe freeze thermal controls Infrastructure antennas Flanged channel posts Intelligent fuses Cardiac blankets Battery connection cab
connectors Power relays Custom-printed retail shelf labels Medical packaging Digital signage Sheet metal fabrication Oxygen therapy products Extensi
ery high-density cable interconnection assemblies Liquid chromatography systems Self-adhesive cable clips Extrusion heat sinks Facility mana
azardous chemical spill control Vandal-proof photocontrol systems HDTV antennas Inflatable seals Pharmaceuticals LNA amplifiers Resettable devices
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Disinfectants Filtered modular jacks Hydrologic and hydrographic services General purpose valves PPO beam harsh environment connectors Recyclin
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urveillance systems Integrated antenna systems Power transistors GPS components Components for home entertainment systems Deluge valves a
elescopie steel tubing Cathode ray tubes Theft, fire, and access control security systems Product disinfection Grating systems Current differential prote
warning systems Computer-printable labels Hose racks Blind-mate hot plugs Antimicrobial dispensers Ruggedized transmitter/receiver modules Safety
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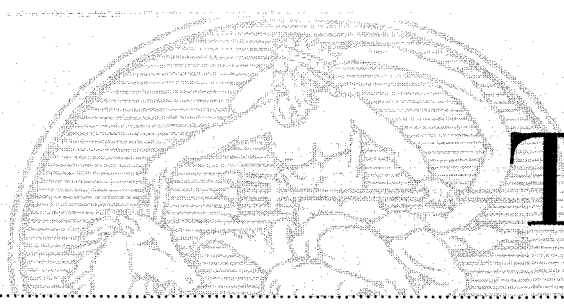
- 13** CALENDAR
14 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
-

THE AGENDA

- 39** **DIVIDED WE STAND** Republicans and Democrats should be careful what they wish for *by Jonathan Rauch*
- 44** **BRIEF LIVES THE X FACTOR** Americans probably care less about Teresa Heinz Kerry's outspokenness than about her exoticism. The question is what they think of it *by Michelle Cottle*
- 48** **THE LIST SEARCH TERMS THAT SELL** *by Nathan Littlefield*
- 50** **THE LAW SUSPENDED SENTENCING** The consequences of "the single most irresponsible decision in the modern history of the Supreme Court" *by Benjamin Wittes*
- 56** **THE ART OF POLICY "TO HELL WITH LIPITOR!"** Medicare reform—an explanation *by P. J. O'Rourke*
- 58** **NATIONAL SECURITY TICK, TICK, TICK** Pakistan is a nuclear time bomb—perhaps the greatest threat to American security today. Here's how to defuse it *by Graham Allison*
- 59** **THE ODDS ARNOLDUS PONTIFEX?** *by Elizabeth Shelburne*
- 62** **PRIMARY SOURCES** Gay marriage and the federal deficit; what your eleven-year-old has in common with presidential debaters; Cuba's looming chaos
- 66** **THE WORLD IN NUMBERS CALLING ALL NATIONS** *by Nathan Littlefield*
-

- 68** **BUSH'S LOST YEAR**
By deciding to invade Iraq, the Bush Administration decided not to do many other things: not to reconstruct Afghanistan, not to deal with the threats posed by North Korea and Iran, and not to wage an effective war on terror. An inventory of opportunities lost *by James Fallows*
- 88** **THE LONG HUNT FOR OSAMA**
Where has he been? How did we ever let him get away? *by Peter Bergen*
- 103** **IF MEMORY DOESN'T SERVE**
Sarah Jessica Parker or Sarah Michelle Gellar? Ashanti or Beyoncé? All will come clear on the Day of Reckoning *by Ian Frazier*
- 108** **THE CRUSADER**
Eliot Spitzer, the attorney general of New York, has risen to national prominence by emulating Teddy Roosevelt and fearlessly taking on powerful interests. His aggressiveness has made him a lot of enemies—but it may propel him to the governor's mansion and beyond *by Sridhar Pappu*
-

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THE ATLANTIC

OCTOBER 2004 | VOLUME 294 | NUMBER 3

(Contents continued)

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS 2004

- 120 THE BIG PICTURE** *by James Fallows and V. V. Ganeshanathan*
128 WHO NEEDS HARVARD? *by Gregg Easterbrook*
134 MEASURE BY MEASURE *by Jay Mathews*
135 INDEPENDENT COUNSEL *by Nicholas Confessore*
141 THE THIRD WAY *by Richard M. Freeland*
148 FLORENCE OF ARABIA (PART II)
One woman's crusade to bring female emancipation to the Middle East
an excerpt from new fiction by Christopher Buckley
85 LEAK *a drawing by Guy Billout*

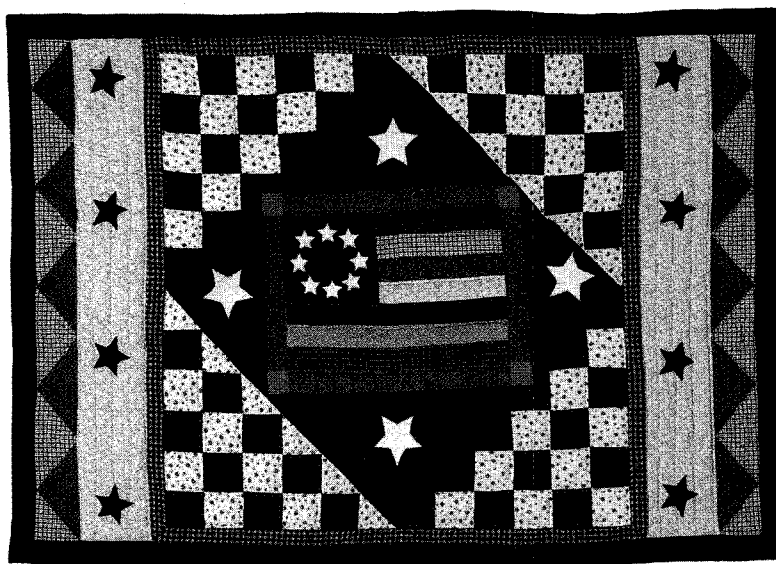
BOOKS & CRITICS

- 161 EDITOR'S CHOICE** Norman Parkinson: Portraits in Fashion, by Robin Muir;
Defending Israel, by Martin Van Creveld; Anthony Powell, by Michael Barber;
Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood, by Steven Mintz; Daily Life in
the United States, 1920–1940, by David E. Kyvig *reviewed by Benjamin Schwarz*
165 A GLOOM OF ONE'S OWN Demanding women with demanding lives,
and the men who love them *by Sandra Tsing Loh*
175 NO WAY, MADAME BOVARY A new translation *by Clive James*
179 READING LIST ROTE FROM UNDERGROUND Progressive books that—
like Michael Moore—(ought to) make progressives wince *by Marc Cooper*
185 THE REAL THING A Bit on the Side, by William Trevor
reviewed by Joseph O'Neill
188 MIND THE GAP Turkey is everyone's idea of a “successful” modern Muslim
state. A new novel will make you think twice *by Christopher Hitchens*

PURSUIITS & RETREATS

- 195 INNOCENT BYSTANDER NEVER MIND** Old science doesn't die ...
by Cullen Murphy
196 A LOOK BACK 125 YEARS AGO IN THE ATLANTIC
197 FOOD GOOD-BYE, CRYOVAC Imagine college food for which students will
fake IDs and line up outside the dining-hall door *by Corby Kummer*
203 THE PUZZLER *by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon*
204 WORD FUGITIVES *by Barbara Wallraff*
206 POST MORTEM THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY DARWIN
Francis Crick (1916–2004) *by Mark Steyn*
208 PROPER-NAME INDEX *by Benjamin Healy*

Poetry by Leonard Cochran (page 116), Laurie Lamon (page 152), and David Solway (page 156)



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– Ralph Waldo Emerson

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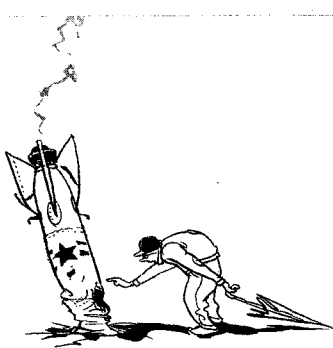
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SEPTEMBER 30

Missile Defense's Debut

Okay, so maybe the system—which consists at this point of a handful of interceptors in silos in Alaska, sitting atop boosters that haven't been tested, hooked up to radar that's not fully operational—doesn't actually work. But on this date the Department of Defense's missile shield, which was the centerpiece of the Bush Administration's pre-9/11 security strategy, officially goes "on alert."

Early tests have not inspired confidence: the system has a five-for-eight record knocking down dummy missiles that were flying low and slow on well-rehearsed trajectories. And it's not known whether the system can function in severe weather, against multiple missiles arriving simultaneously, or when confronted by simple countermeasures such as balloons. The first tests under these conditions won't be run until 2007. To date the Pentagon has spent at least \$90 billion on the program.

OCTOBER 1

War Cost Estimate Due

As of this summer the military costs for the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq had reached \$150 billion—about three times the White House's favored pre-war estimate. Congress has now required that the Bush Administration produce a new estimate for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, projecting costs through 2011. The Congressional Budget Office has already estimated a cost as high as \$213 billion (not including reconstruction costs). Any Administration estimate falling significantly below this number will arouse suspicion.



OCTOBER 9

Afghan Elections

How much power will the interim President, Hamid Karzai, have to concede to local warlords in exchange for their support? In July he signaled that he planned to concede little, by dropping his presumptive running mate, the powerful warlord Muhammad Fahim. In response Fahim has thrown his support to Karzai's opposition. Because Fahim's private army still roams the countryside, there are concerns that political conflict could turn bloody. Meanwhile, violence in the Taliban-friendly south, where Karzai is unpopular, has slowed preparations for the election there.

OCTOBER 15

Mayday for Marriage Rally

One indication of the depth of opposition to gay marriage will be the size of the rally against it on the National Mall, in Washington. The first Mayday for Marriage rally, this past spring, drew 25,000 people. Organizers of the second Mayday for Marriage rally have said they hope for as many as a million protesters in Washington and at satellite rallies in some states. That's a high bar. The optimistically named Million

CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

Man March of 1995 and Million Mom March of 2000 may have drawn only about 500,000 people each (exact numbers are disputed). For what it's worth, the actual Mayday permit request for the Mall estimates only 100,000 marchers.



OCTOBER 16

Report on Anglican Schism

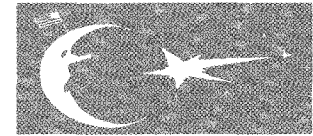
The consecration of an openly gay bishop in New Hampshire last November divided the Anglican Church. With talk of schism in the air, the Archbishop of Canterbury convened the Lambeth Commission. Its report is expected to suggest several models for a "trial separation" between churches that countenance gay clerics and those that don't. Anglican churches in Latin America and Africa appear ill disposed to compromise: Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria, for one, has suggested that if the dioceses accepting gay clerics don't repent or get expelled, he will lead a break-away faction.

OCTOBER 16–NOVEMBER 13

Ramadan

U.S. soldiers in Iraq took to calling the Muslim holy month "Bombadan" last October, after four suicide car bombers killed thirty-five people in

coordinated attacks at Ramadan's beginning. Although the holy month traditionally calls for peaceful fasting and self-

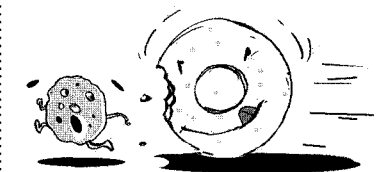


reflection, it has militant associations for Islamic radicals—it was, after all, the occasion not only of Muhammad's first victory over infidels, in 624, but also of the 1973 invasion of Israel by Syria and Egypt.

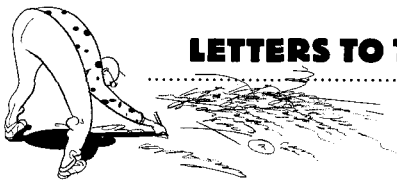
OCTOBER 19

Election 2004 Cookie Cook-Off Results

Each election year since 1992 the presidential candidates' wives have submitted cookie recipes to *Family Circle* magazine, whose readers then voted for a favorite. So far the cook-off winner has always been the next First



Lady. Laura Bush's recipe this year is for oatmeal chocolate-chunk cookies, Teresa Heinz Kerry's for pumpkin spice. But the predictive effect of the cook-off may not hold this time, because Teresa recently revealed that she doesn't even like pumpkin-spice cookies; a panicked staffer submitted the recipe on her behalf after *Family Circle* determined that Teresa's first recipe (for "Yummy Wonders") simply didn't work.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

When George Meets John

James Fallows's description of John Kerry's debating skills ("When George Meets John," July/August *Atlantic*) was interesting, but what was most remarkable was Fallows's documentation of President Bush's mostly overlooked changes over the past decade—specifically, "the striking decline in his sentence-by-sentence speaking skills." Fallows points to "speculations that there must be some organic basis for the President's peculiar mode of speech—a learning disability, a reading problem, dyslexia or some other disorder," but correctly concludes, "The main problem with these theories is that through his forties Bush was perfectly articulate."

I, too, felt that something organic was wrong with President Bush, most probably dyslexia. But I was unaware of what Fallows pointed out so clearly: that Bush's problems have been developing slowly, and that just a decade ago he was an articulate debater, "artful indeed in steering questions and challenges to his desired subjects," who "did not pause before forcing out big words, as he so often does now, or invent mangled new ones." Consider, in contrast, the present: "the informal Q&As he has tried to avoid," "Bush's recent faltering performances," "his unfortunate puzzled-chimp expression when trying to answer questions," "his stalling, defensive pose when put on the spot," "speaking more slowly and less gracefully."

Not being a professional medical researcher and clinician, Fallows cannot be faulted for not putting two and two together. But he was 100 percent correct in suggesting that Bush's problem cannot be "a learning disability, a reading problem, [or] dyslexia," because patients with those problems have always had them. Slowly developing cognitive deficits, as demonstrated so clearly by the President, can represent only one diagnosis, and

that is "presenile dementia"! Presenile dementia is best described to nonmedical persons as a fairly typical Alzheimer's situation that develops significantly earlier in life, well before what is usually considered old age. It runs about the same course as typical senile dementias, such as classical Alzheimer's—to incapacitation and, eventually, death, as with President Ronald Reagan, but at a relatively earlier age. President Bush's "mangled" words are a demonstration of what physicians call "confabulation," and are almost specific to the diagnosis of a true dementia. Bush should immediately be given the advantage of a considered professional diagnosis, and started on drugs that offer the possibility of retarding the slow but inexorable course of the disease.

*Joseph M. Price, M.D.
Carsonville, Mich.*

The whole of James Fallows's article on Bush and Kerry's debate styles was interesting, but one comment jumped out at me: "[Bush] has rarely been interested in the details of any policy matter, believing that he 'has people' who can master the subject for him." What further proof is needed that Bush's policy decisions are based on whatever his "people" choose to tell him? Naturally they will tell him whatever (and only whatever) supports their own agendas.

Although, as Mary Beth Rogers says in the Fallows article, his "ability to stick to his message and repeat it" might be "remarkable," it implies to me that he doesn't know enough to answer questions that go beyond the text he has been given by his "people." I suspect that his "widely noted lack of eloquence" is due to his understandable insecurity. If the ideas he is expressing are not his ideas, based on his own knowledge and decision-making, then he can only repeat by rote what he has rehearsed.

Bush's lack of interest in details gives unprecedented power to his advisers

(read "puppeteers")—in this case the extremists of the military/industrial/religious-right coalition who are currently running the White House, the country, and, if they have their way, the world. We need an independent thinker in the Oval Office.

*Anne Carpenter
Fair Haven, N.J.*

Five Days in Fallujah

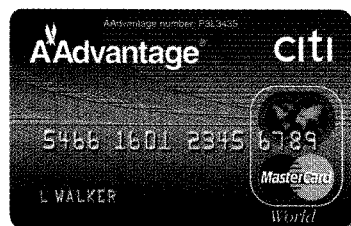
My compliments and gratitude to your magazine and to Robert D. Kaplan for his gem of an article describing the Marines in action ("Five Days in Fallujah," July/August *Atlantic*). Thanks to his willingness to share the trials of a grunt, readers are able to understand and deeply appreciate the extraordinary difficulties faced by combatants in the Middle East wars we now fight.

There is much to praise in the article, but the salient truth is that the U.S. Marine Corps is a national treasure. Somehow it has been able to preserve its traditions of leadership and training to remain our most effective fighting force, dollar for dollar, man for man, in a national culture decidedly less disciplined than it is. One understands why the Marines fight and face wounds and death selflessly for one another when one reads about the visit of the highest leaders, including the commandant, to the battlefield. I might add that these same officers perform the hardest service of all when they personally visit the grief-stricken families of fallen Marines of all ranks, which they do often and without fanfare.

*John Meyers
Sarasota, Fla.*

Robert D. Kaplan's fable, "Five Days in Fallujah," is filled with inaccuracies and spurious conclusions, and his comparisons with the battle for Hue are absurd.

A black and white photograph of a man in a wetsuit sitting on a surfboard in the ocean, smiling. The man is looking towards the camera with a joyful expression. The background shows the horizon line of the ocean under a clear sky.



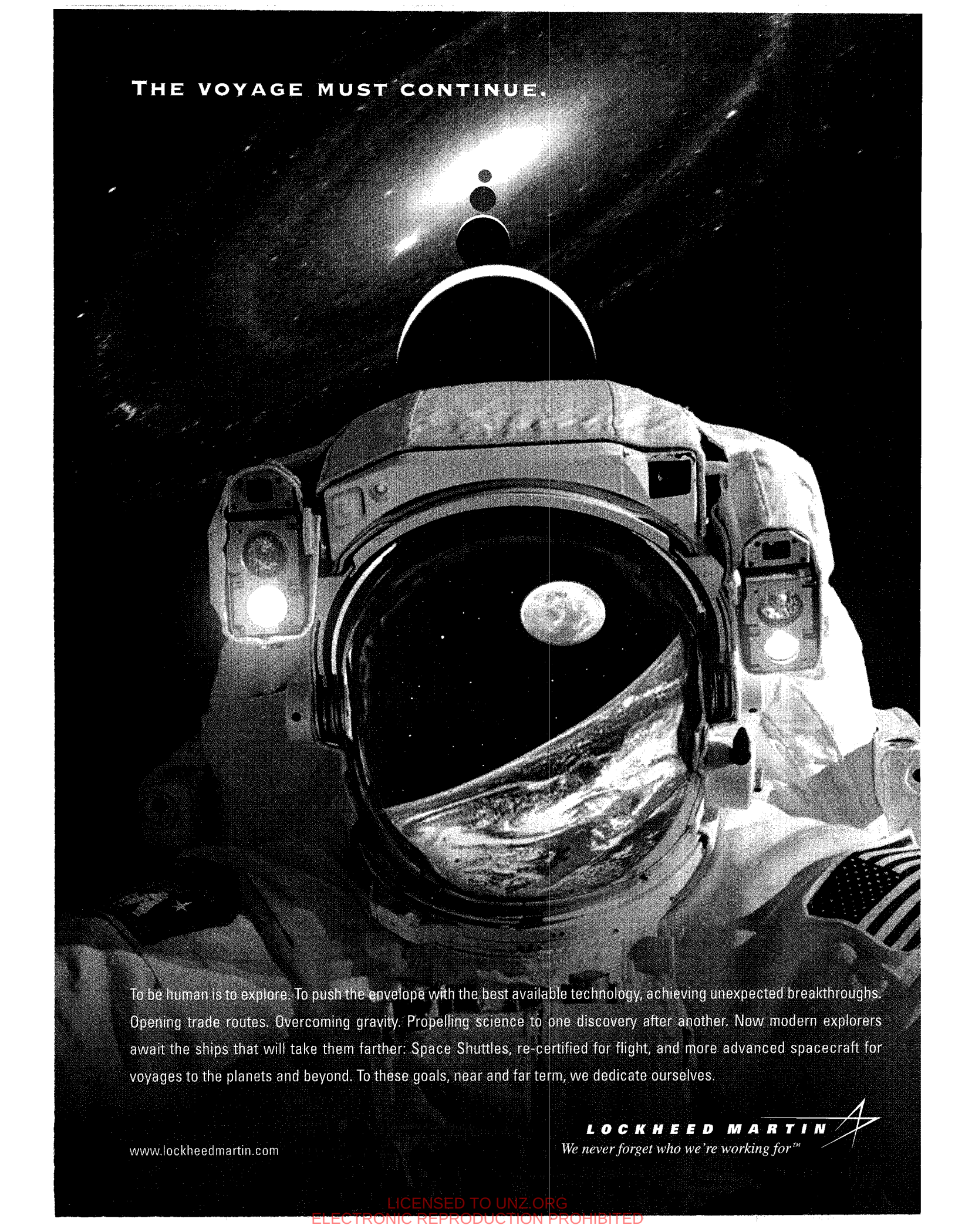
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1) The battle for Hue was in no way a "lopsided" victory. Twelve thousand North Vietnamese soldiers held the Citadel at Hue for twenty-six days. Even after the Citadel was retaken, we battled the remaining 7,000 regulars of the 304, 325C, and 324B NVA divisions and other local regiments for more than two months north and west of the city.

2) Kaplan seems to suggest that three battalions of Marines recaptured Hue without any assistance. Actually the Marines made up about a quarter to a fifth of the U.S./ARVN forces that retook Hue. Four battalions of the U.S. Army and eight battalions of ARVN soldiers took part in the action.

3) Kaplan reported only Marine casualties. In addition to those listed in this "lopsided" victory, seventy-four U.S. soldiers were killed in action, and another 507 were wounded. Among the ARVN forces, 384 were killed in action and 1,830 were wounded.

4) Later Kaplan states, "Hue, a city with half the population of Fallujah, had been assaulted by nearly three Marine battalions" (actually fifteen battalions altogether), making it sound as if we were fighting the population. We were fighting 12,000 highly trained and well-disciplined North Vietnamese and Vietcong. At Fallujah the Marines were matched against 2,000 rag-tag insurgents, according to Defense Department estimates.

The comparison to Hue breaks down on many fronts, but the major one is that we did not capitulate and form a "Hue Defense Force" composed of NVA and VC units, and pull back to a safe distance so that the "seeds of democracy" could take root.

*Terry F. Stulce
Ooltewah, Tenn.*

Having spent a great deal of time in Fallujah since the occupation of Iraq began, and most recently the entire month of May for my article on Fallujah for *The New Yorker*, I was disappointed by Robert D. Kaplan's piece, and also by Kaplan's unambiguous identification with the Marines he wrote about.

Kaplan describes Fallujah as "the classic terrain of radicalism," distinguishing radicalism from conserva-

tism. He views the authoritarian royal courts of Morocco, Jordan, and the Gulf States as venerable for their traditions—traditions that in the case of Jordan and the Gulf are artificial and not more than a century old. Unlike these royal courts, which in fact represent the "break in tradition [in] the House of Islam" of which Kaplan writes, Fallujah is the most traditional city in Iraq. Unlike Tikrit, for example, where the tribes are urbanized, based inside the city, in Fallujah the tribes are concentrated in the rural areas surrounding the city, and thus have not modernized or abandoned tribal customs as much as their counterparts in other parts of the country. The tight tribal bonds of Fallujah helped preserve the city's stability after the fall of Saddam's regime. The religious and tribal leaders appointed their own civil-management council even before American troops entered the city. Tribes assumed control of the city's institutions and protected government buildings. Religious leaders, whose authority was respected, exhorted the people to respect the law and maintain order. Thus there was a continuity of authority and tradition in Fallujah that was lacking in other parts of Iraq.

Known in Iraq as Medinat al-Masajid, or the City of Mosques, for the more than eighty mosques that dominate the city's cultural life, Fallujah is famous for its Islamic traditions, including various orders of Sufi Islam and the very conservative Salafi brand of Sunni Islam. One does not find the "break in tradition" of which Kaplan speaks, or the reinvented abstract and ideological form of Islam he blames for radicalism. Instead one finds numerous centers for religious study that produce many of Iraq's most important theologians. The vast majority of the armed fighters in Fallujah were motivated not by radical Islamic beliefs but by nationalism and pride, and were fighting to defend their families, homes, city, and way of life from the brutal American onslaught.

Kaplan comments on the dominance of southern Christian fundamentalism among the Marines without judgment, and reports that their chaplain compared their entry into Fallujah with Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem,

describing their impending destruction of much of the city as "a spiritual battle" in which "you Marines are the tools of mercy." Kaplan admires the Marines' "matter-of-fact willingness to die." Though he mistakenly insists that the defenders of Fallujah were cowards who used the cover of women and children to attack the Marines, attackers and defenders had much more in common than he would have us believe. Fallujah's defenders believed they were defending their religion, and many bravely sacrificed their lives in defense of their neighborhoods against a terrible and mighty foe. They displayed the same solidarity and brotherhood that Kaplan admires so much in his Marines.

Kaplan's glorification of military values is also disturbing. Perhaps some Marines should have questioned orders to invade a city of 300,000, pulverizing neighborhoods and killing at least 800 people, most of them women and children. I smelled death in the city's air from corpses hastily buried in back yards and from 500 bodies in the soccer fields; I saw hospitals riddled with bullets and shells; I met ambulance drivers who had been wounded by snipers; I saw children missing limbs from Marine bullets and shells. But Kaplan either conceals or is unaware of the indiscriminate violence unleashed upon the city by the Marines he identifies with so much, who caused thousands of refugees and then prevented families from returning home unless the fighters surrendered. Kaplan's comfort with the word "imperialism" is also worrisome, but most alarming is his repeated use of the word "us" to describe the Marines. Should he not strive for a certain amount of objectivity?

Kaplan is maddened by the "enemy's" successful intelligence and also seems disappointed by the "bad news" that "politics in the form of ceasefires" was intruding to prevent him and his Marines from "taking down the city." Did he assimilate the urge to fight to the end that the young Marines he was with no doubt felt? Though, having been embedded myself, I recognize the difficulty of remaining impartial when living with the affable young men of the American military who risk their



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lives for the whims of politicians back in Washington, I believe it is no less, and perhaps more, important to identify with those on the receiving end of American imperialism and military might, and to question the assertions of both military and political leaders.

Nir Rosen
New York, N.Y.

Robert D. Kaplan replies:

Terry Stulce makes good points. I should have included the Army's role at Hue in my relatively brief reference to that battle. But even when you include the Army and ARVN casualties the results were still lopsided. The capitulation at Fallujah was finalized after my article went to press. Nevertheless, given the nature of urban combat and the use of Buddhist temples and mosques as enemy fortresses, my statement that Hue was "partially" a model for Fallujah is one I stand by.

As for Nir Rosen, given the changes wrought by technology, urbanization, and vast oil revenues in the Gulf, the regimes in Jordan and the Gulf have done exemplary jobs maintaining tradition and stability in their societies. Mr. Rosen praises Muslim theologians in Fallujah, but some of the planning for the butchering and burning of four Americans took place in the city's mosques. It was that atrocity that brought the 1st Battalion of the 5th Marine Regiment into the city in the first place.

Simply because I did not snobbishly blast Christian fundamentalism, the way so many in the media often do, doesn't mean I was without judgment on it. In fact, I found it made troops more disciplined and compassionate. As for the "indiscriminate violence" of the Marines, that was simply not what I observed: rather, as I wrote from firsthand knowledge, Marines regularly risk getting shot to protect civilians.

I am in the midst of a project about the middle and lower ranks of the American military and how the world looks from their point of view. Meanwhile, the global media are full of people, like Mr. Rosen, who are more than willing to write about things from the viewpoint of those fighting the United States. The media establishment has often lavished praise on those who cover life exclusively from the point of view of oppressed minorities and the working poor. Apparently it doesn't consider Amer-

ica's own working-class military—drawn predominantly from the South and adjacent areas—deserving of similar empathy. Given the pressure on our military, and that the overwhelming majority of our troops around the world behave in an exemplary fashion, I am saddened by this double standard.

Kerry's Foreign Policy

At the end of his article on John Kerry's foreign policy ("Kerry Faces the World," July/August *Atlantic*) Joshua Micah Marshall writes that Kerry Democrats do not believe the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has caused the current Middle East instability, though he says that the confrontations in the West Bank must be resolved before any U.S. effort to liberalize the region can succeed. Marshall says nothing further on the topic, and essentially ignores any dialogue about what may be the most crucial issue in U.S. foreign policy: the effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, now more than half a century old, on U.S. interests and safety. Does silence on this topic suggest a lack of new initiatives or thought from Kerry, or a failure on Marshall's part to sense a need for further discussion? This issue can only grow as the No. 1 foreign-policy sore point for the future.

The real failure of American foreign policy in the Middle East, where we are universally scorned, is that we have not connected the dots of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and terrorist attacks against the United States. The indignity felt by all Arabs, from Morocco to Dubai, as a result of land's being taken from Arabic-speaking people breeds contempt for the United States, with its platitudes of justice and fairness that don't seem to apply to Arabs. The Arab street and the Arab press are well aware that settlements in the West Bank are subsidized by the Israeli government, which receives U.S. foreign aid in the amount of \$2 billion or more a year. And although not all Arabs are terrorists, they all recognize unfairness and a loss of dignity when land is taken and justice is applied selectively. As the Arab world continues to note the now obvious bias on land claims in Palestine,

fringe elements in the street are further inspired to join the ranks of anti-U.S. terrorists.

I am not anti-Israel or anti-Semitic, but I am a recent reader of many history books about the region. Like the American Indians of the nineteenth century, the Palestinians got screwed. Can Kerry Democrats grasp this concept no more or less than Bush Republicans?

Tom Menza
Colorado Springs, Colo.

As a veteran of two Clinton-era contingency operations, I found Joshua Marshall's reverence for Senator Kerry's foreign-policy wonks puzzling. Surely we aren't so far removed from the Clinton years that we look back on that era's shiftless foreign policy as a model of success. I make this point not to criticize the Clinton Administration but to suggest that the members of the "professional national-security apparatus" whom Marshall affords such praise may deserve more-critical scrutiny. One might even argue, in the post-9/11 world, that the approach they embodied then and espouse now is due for some tough reappraisal.

May I make the indelicate suggestion that the vehemence of ex-Clinton officials such as Madeleine Albright, Richard Holbrooke, and Rand Beers flows from a combination of intellectual arrogance and concern for their own legacies? Although the situations in both Afghanistan and Iraq came to a head under the current Administration, no rational observer would conclude that either threat emerged overnight. In the former case the Clinton Administration chose to deal with Osama bin Laden with a few cruise missiles and other half-hearted measures. In the latter case, although the Administration adopted the policy of regime change in 1998—a policy Senator Kerry supported—it took little action to further this end. With that in mind, it seems disingenuous to entertain criticism of current policies from those who could have applied the ounce of prevention but failed to do so. The same could easily be said of our tensions with North Korea and Iran.

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policy team advocates seems to depend significantly and tellingly on the circumstances. Although Senator Kerry's advisers criticize President Bush for failing to secure UN approval for the invasion of Iraq, they cite the bombing of Serbia, executed without UN approval, as a success story. Moreover, whereas U.S. policy toward North Korea encourages that country's neighbors to take part in resolving conflict on the peninsula, Senator Kerry advocates bilateral talks. Marshall accepts these policy differences as reasoned and nuanced; a more cynical observer might suspect a touch of political expedience and opportunism.

At the end of the day, Marshall's evaluation of the Kerry foreign-policy team suffers from a curious lack of patience. No one in the Bush Administration would argue, I believe, that the post-invasion operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have gone perfectly. As in any operation, numerous errors and miscalculations have occurred. Intelligence is never perfect, the enemy has a vote, and successful counterinsurgency, not to mention nation-building, takes time. With that in mind, I would remind readers that the Balkans, with a relatively Western mindset and history, remain home to a multinational force roughly a decade after the first intervention. Surely no one should expect miracles in the short run from operations in Afghanistan, a failed state that has never had a strong central government, or Iraq, a multi-ethnic state ruled by a dictator for the past three decades.

Although this is not a generous view, I submit that the brilliance now attributed to Senator Kerry's foreign-policy advisers was less apparent when they were in a position to demonstrate it directly. It is far easier to speak of what someone else should have done than to make the correct choices yourself. Of course, as always, history will be the judge.

*Rob Crowley
Sammamish, Wash.*

Trotsky Reconsidered

Christopher Hitchens's gratuitous use of a Jewish caricature should not pass without comment. In his essay

on Isaac Deutscher's Trotsky biography ("The Old Man," July/August *Atlantic*) Hitchens says the work is "written in the stern and judging manner of the Talmudic scholar that Deutscher had been"—selecting qualities that are stereotypically associated with the God of the Jews. This characterization has its roots in Christian supersessionism—the notion that the jealous and angry God of the Old Testament has been supplanted by the God of love of the New Testament. It is far from an accurate description of Jews or Judaism or Talmudic scholars. If Deutscher was indeed stern and judging, perhaps there were reasons other than his ethnic and religious origins. Christian polemic and ethnic stereotypes do not belong in an otherwise reasoned and thoughtful piece like this one.

*Bob Goldfarb
Seattle, Wash.*

Christopher Hitchens is my favorite journalist, but I question his nomination of Leon Trotsky for sainthood. After he'd lost power, Trotsky blathered on about human rights. When he had power, he was a routine Bolshevik thug whose solution to every problem was the firing squad.

Had he triumphed, Trotsky would most likely have been no more merciful to Stalin than Stalin was to him. If he had none of Stalin's paranoia, he had every bit of Stalin's ruthlessness and contempt for human decency. Slaughter is slaughter, even when driven by alleged idealism. Should we overlook that merely for his incisive writing style?

*Don O'Connor
Kreamer, Pa.*

Plan of Attack

Bruce Hoffman makes many valid points regarding the situation in Iraq ("Plan of Attack," July/August *Atlantic*). However, his claims—that "the vigorousness of the insurgency ... stems directly from the fact that ... we failed to anticipate the widespread civil disorder and looting that followed the capture of Baghdad," and that in Iraq we are facing a new kind of "netwar"—are dubious.

It's impossible to prove that the guerrillas fighting us are more vigorous now than they would have been had museums in Baghdad not been looted. But the implication that but for the initial disorder the insurgency would not have taken root is facile. Hoffman points out that successful guerrilla groups evolve and adapt. In Iraq a solid core of ex-regime elements and (very soon after if not from the start) foreign fighters clearly had every intention of opposing the United States no matter what we did after our initial successes. With plenty of leftover munitions (possibly including chemical weapons), they had the means as well.

We've largely accepted the notion that this insurgency is somehow our fault. Our focus on the insurgents' disaffection obscures the fact that they would have fought regardless of our conduct. Long ago we called insurgents bandits. Today we sometimes call them terrorists. Either term portrays the enemy in Iraq more accurately than "insurgents," which means "rebels." Our enemies' motivations—greed, the pursuit of power, the urge to spread religious orthodoxies—have little to do with our conduct. Our enemies in Iraq are fighting us not because the postwar social climate led them to it but because that was always their intention. It furthers their goals as they perceive them.

Finally, "netwar" sounds like old wine in a new bottle. Ideologically opposed bands of guerrillas have frequently cooperated against a common enemy, and have often operated in loosely organized bands—like the Spanish partisans who gave us the word "guerrilla." Included in the mix may be ordinary adventurers and criminals. Tito's partisans were a large and well-organized band with a hierarchical structure; but elsewhere in Eastern European forests Polish Communists, Polish anti-Communists, Ukrainian nationalists, Soviet partisans, and Jewish partisans all fought the Nazis, often in loosely organized groups, sometimes cooperatively, sometimes not. What is happening in Iraq now is not new, it's atavistic.

*Jonathan F. Keiler
Bowie, Md.*



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Bruce Hoffman's meditation on security was perplexing. Hoffman says that elements in Iraq that were diametrically opposed during Saddam Hussein's reign, including secular Baathists and domestic and foreign religious extremists, are coming together around their resentment of the American occupation. Seen in hindsight, he says, the moral of the story is not to "let insurgencies get started in the first place." Good thing George III didn't know that.

Shelley Masar
Urbana, Ill.

Bruce Hoffman's recommendations are no more than common sense and so vague as to be useless. "Learn to recognize the signs of a budding insurgency." How is this done? "Study and understand the enemy in advance." How is this done when the enemy, without precedent in its history, collapses in the face of attack? Hoffman might as well have written, "We must improve education and living standards among poor Americans." Prescriptions are easy. Execution is hard.

Toni Mack
Houston, Texas

Bruce Hoffman replies:

The vigor of the Iraqi insurgents has less to do with looted museums than with the numerous armories, arsenals, and arms caches that American forces neglected to secure following the invasion. As Jonathan Keiler himself observes, this oversight ensured an ample stream of weaponry that has sustained the insurgents since. But Mr. Keiler is mistaken in alleging that I blame the United States for the insurgency. Rather, my point is that the belief that we would be greeted as liberators blinded us to even the possibility of the resistance that Mr. Keiler argues was a foregone conclusion. We simply did not take into account the possibility, let alone the implications, of any significant post-invasion Iraqi armed resistance. Mr. Keiler is correct that diverse bands of guerrillas cooperating with one another are not new. What is new in Iraq, however, is the hitherto unfathomable alliances (however ephemeral) between Sunni and Shia, religious and secular, nationalist and foreigner,

and the strategic impact they have had on Iraqi stability—something Eastern European partisans during World War II were never able to achieve.

The lesson of the Iraqi insurgency is indeed as timeless as Shelley Masar writes. Just as George III doubtless dismissed the eighteenth-century American rebels as inconsequential "dead enders" and "criminals," so the potential political and military ramifications of the Iraqi insurgents were derided. The lesson in both cases is that once insurgencies erupt and are allowed to gather momentum, they become exponentially more difficult to defeat.

Toni Mack is correct that my recommendations are "no more than common sense," but wrong that they are "useless." The two RAND reports I referred to contain all the specifics that for reasons of space could not be included in the article. To take one example, they describe how building an efficient indigenous police force—with a dedicated intelligence arm—has permitted authorities elsewhere not only to learn about the intentions and capabilities of actual and potential adversaries but also to thwart nascent acts of violence before they can escalate into full-blown insurgency. Finally, the ease of prescription in comparison with the challenges of execution were never clearer to me than this past spring, when I worked on both policy and implementation in Iraq.

Radio Pundits

P.J. O'Rourke is a witty and insightful observer of contemporary political life, but his cleverness gets the better of him at one point in the otherwise admirable essay "I Agree With Me" (July/August *Atlantic*). In the midst of lamenting the way that political pundits on radio and in print eschew substantive debate or persuasion in favor of preaching to the choir, he inserts a couple of quips about listening to National Public Radio to hear the message of the other side: "World to end—poor and minorities hardest hit." Although the stereotype of public broadcasting as liberal propaganda is standard among conservatives, it is utterly ungrounded. Its audience may be fairly liberal, but no one who listened to NPR's extraordi-

narily respectful week of retrospectives following Ronald Reagan's death could seriously label the network partisan. In contrast to the ideological pundits of the right and the left whom O'Rourke treats in his essay, NPR has embodied the highest standards of balance, intelligence, and moderation that one could expect from a broadcast medium.

As a brief aside in a humorous essay whose main targets lay elsewhere, this comment about NPR wouldn't merit criticism except for two things. First, for a writer normally so attuned to the ironies and self-contradictions of the politically naive, O'Rourke seems to miss the irony involved in employing one of the classic strategies used by partisans to manipulate moderates in an essay otherwise devoted to complaining about how partisan games disrupt substantive political debate. Second, he should know full well that NPR includes conservative voices, because his is one of them. His appearances on *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me* are just one bit of evidence among many that NPR is not the liberal mouthpiece of conservatives' imagining but a forum that (much like *The Atlantic*) gives space to original ideas and well-wrought words wherever on the political spectrum they may be found. O'Rourke's brand of conservatism is usually free of the angry, meanspirited, and humorless tone he criticizes in his colleagues, and thus it seems a bit small of him in this essay to take a nip at the (very even) hands that feed him.

Glenn Whitehouse
Tampa, Fla.

P. J. O'Rourke replies:

I had no idea NPR was so conservative. If I'd known that they, too, agree with me, I would have quit listening years ago.

Al Sharpton

Mark Bowden's article on what makes Al Sharpton tick ("Pompadour With a Monkey Wrench," July/August *Atlantic*) was fascinating. It was marred only by a curious emphasis on hair. I suppose black hair and skin are interesting to a lot of people, but they

do not define who we are. I was disappointed to see that the stereotype of conked (chemically straightened) hair was used in Bowden's description of the dapper Adam Clayton Powell. Powell, who obviously had just as many European genes as he did African, if not more, had naturally straight hair. That is true of thousands of African-Americans, including Walter White, Julian Bond, and Thurgood Marshall, to name a few of obvious mixed racial heritage.

*Brinda George
Highland Springs, Va.*

Mark Bowden's article on Al Sharpton pokes holes in a boat that needs sinking, but his glibness betrays what may be his own bias. First, it is interesting that Bowden so handily dismisses national health care and any welfare system as failures contributing to ballooning deficits, noting that their viability is disproved by "the disastrous history of ... socialist schemes worldwide." In a word, it seems that such things are simply passé. My reading of our current deficit has little to do with entitlement programs, endangered as they are. Try the dismantling of our tax system and a bloated military budget as root causes of our current financial mess. And regarding the socialist schemes, are we talking about Poland and Romania or Canada and Sweden? It's an amazing argument that gets rid of the idea of national health care in one sentence.

Second, Bowden seems to set up a straw man. He proves that Sharpton is not a serious African-American candidate, and then says Sharpton's failure shows that race is no longer an issue among African-Americans, and that they wouldn't necessarily support a serious candidate of their background. But how would Colin Powell have done in the African-American community? If Sharpton had any credibility at all, his numbers would have been much greater. Sharpton's failure demonstrates that African-Americans won't be taken in by a huckster, even one who says he is speaking for them. Whether we like it or not, race is still an issue.

*Bill Harley
Seekonk, Mass.*

Why Dean Lost

What a pleasure to read Paul Maslin, who is humble and self-aware, and willing to shoulder blame for his part in the Dean campaign screw-ups ("The Front-Runner's Fall," May *Atlantic*). I hope he finds another job on another campaign, since he is honest, introspective, and willing to learn from the past.

*Mark Tokarski
Bozeman, Mont.*

I strongly supported Howard Dean and the potential for positive change in the United States. Thus I read with great interest Paul Maslin's article on why Dean lost. I could not disagree more with his conclusions.

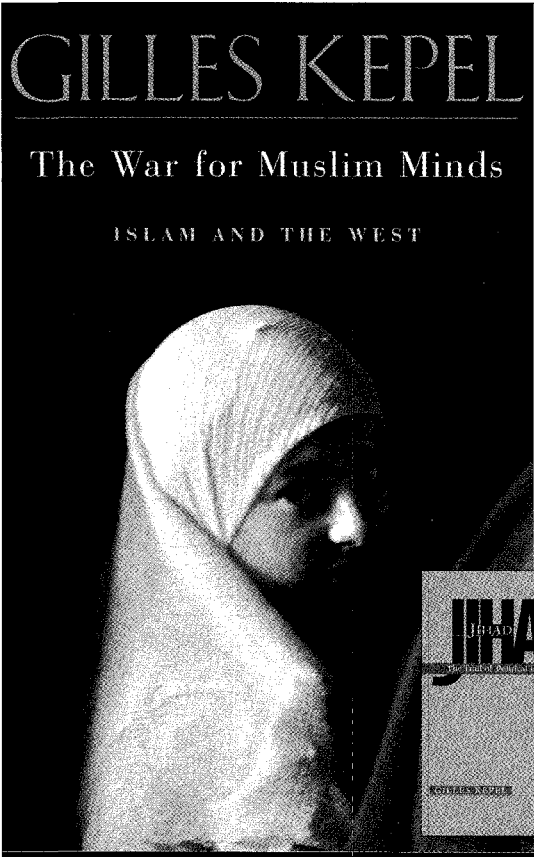
Dean went down so easily because he was very poorly served by his campaign staff, of which Maslin was a key part. In Dean the staff had a populist and, by American standards, an unconventional politician who threatened real change to the status quo. This real threat of change was symbolized by his unconventional campaign tactics, which

allowed him to maneuver outside the control of that status quo.

Dean's staffers seem to have been caught completely off guard and failed to anticipate the attacks of the media and the Democratic Party—which, of course, competent staffers would have understood were all but guaranteed.

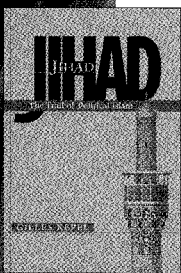
At the first hint of pressure they immediately folded. Instead of embracing the reality that Dean was a passionate man willing to give strong emotional voice to an integrated belief system, they capitulated and immediately tried to make him look like any other moderate-speaking, stale, safe "establishment" politician. It is no surprise that the media and the party machine would go out of their way to attack those aspects of Howard Dean that were his strengths. By their actions the staffers basically were telling everyone that they agreed that Dean's strengths were weaknesses. Of course the outcome was easily foreseen.

Like peasant rebels, Dean's staffers used guerrilla tactics against a lumbering empire with great success. But like a lot of stupid peasants, they really



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didn't know what they were doing, and thought their success would allow them to fight the empire on the empire's own terms. Like all peasants who have tried this, they got obliterated in short order.

*Thomas DeChastelain
Ottawa, Ontario*

I read with interest Paul Maslin's account of the fall of Governor Howard Dean's campaign, having been a volunteer for Senator John Edwards for five days leading up to the Iowa caucuses. I have several observations, based on my experience:

Iowa Democrats did not become sick and tired only of the "Perfect Storm" phone calls and visits; they were tired of calls and visits from all the major campaigns. I spent many hours on such "canvassing" from the Friday before the caucuses through the Monday they were held, and bore the brunt of many an irate callee's outrage. And I think that outrage was justified. As the final days went by, campaigns focused more and more on the voters they had coded as "undecided." From what those Iowans told me, at least one and often several phone calls or visits per day from each of the four main campaigns was common. Voters who declared their allegiance early and unequivocally (coded as "ones" in the Dean campaign, "twos" in the Edwards) were bothered the least—until caucus day, when Edwards "twos" received two phone calls and one visit each. So despite the fact that the number of Dean volunteers (many times the number of Edwards volunteers) went far beyond the point of diminishing returns and "deep into overkill," as Maslin wrote, it can't be said that this was a cause of Dean's fall. Iowa Democrats were tired of all of us.

Why did the campaigns push the canvassing tactic so hard? I would guess that it was an instance of "everyone else is doing it, so we better too, or we might not be taken seriously." The constant exhortation from Des Moines was to "make one more call," because that's what Kerry's, Gephardt's, and Dean's people were doing. Further, I suspect that the idea that "the best organization wins" played a role—though in this case quantity was mistaken for quality.

It's hard to believe that Dean's com-

ment that "the capture of Saddam Hussein has not made America safer" made any significant difference in the outcome of the campaign. Polling numbers may suggest that's the case, as Maslin says in his article, but the antiwar (and anti-Bush) feeling had reached such a fever pitch among Iowa Democrats in the days leading up to the caucuses that any criticism of President Bush and the war met with approval. There was almost a "groupthink" mentality about the issues of the war and jobs and trade: the populist arguments fed on themselves, and were accepted as gospel by the time of the caucuses. (Senator Joe Lieberman, it follows, was correct to skip Iowa.)

The "chip-on-my-shoulder" strategy Dean adopted was the best thing that ever happened to his opponents—except Gephardt, whose fear of losing guaranteed a loss. For everyone else, Dean became the attack dog; they could take the high road and appear "presidential." Surely Dean was simply being Dean, an admirable trait; but surely his staff should have advised him to change his tone long before the infamous scream.

In the event, Kerry got exactly what he needed from Iowa: a win. My candidate, Edwards, came close to getting what he wanted. Second place was fine, but not second place to Kerry; Edwards's strategy of ending as one of two final candidates became reality, but ideally the other remaining candidate would have been Maslin's boss.

*Andrew Steele
Valparaiso, Ind.*

Why did men of Paul Maslin's and Joe Trippi's obvious intellectual brilliance allow themselves to be used by a candidate who repeatedly demonstrated his lack of fitness for the office he was seeking? Maslin writes, "Our candidate's erratic judgment, loose tongue, and overall stubbornness wore our spirits down," and says that the candidate was in sore need of an adult handler; he describes with clear objectivity the hypocrisy of Mr. Open Government's refusing to unseal his records as governor of Vermont. Yet Maslin seems downright wistful, blaming himself for allowing a negative ad to run in Iowa—an ad that backfired. He writes, "Had

the vote been closer, I believe, there would have been no 'I have a scream' speech on caucus night." Or, if I may be permitted to paraphrase, "If only we had done a better job of protecting the true candidate from the American people, we might have gotten what we wanted: a Howard Dean presidency." Am I missing something?

*Philip C. Williams
Fayetteville, N.C.*

Paul Maslin's view that positioning Howard Dean as "the" candidate opposing the Iraq War and Dick Gephardt as "the" pro-war candidate ignored John Kerry and John Edwards seems to answer only half the question of why this contributed to Dean's loss in Iowa. Where in the polling were Iowans' sentiments toward the war itself assessed? If a majority believed that the United States should be in Iraq, then of course Dean's rejection of further military spending would have done him a disservice.

*Nan Doyle
Cambridge, Mass.*

Paul Maslin replies:

Presidential campaigns are never easy to dissect, and this one was more complex than most. I do believe that the following statements apply: 1) Consultants almost never deserve all the credit they receive when their candidates win, and they nearly always manage to deflect some of the blame they're due when their candidates lose. 2) A campaign—for better or worse—is generally a reflection of the candidate. I tried, perhaps unsuccessfully, to write an account of a part of the Dean campaign mindful of each statement—on the one hand, an honest assessment of what went wrong, including some self-criticism; and on the other, a window into the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate.

Howard Dean awakened the Democratic Party in the spring and summer of 2003. The benefits he gained from that act far surpassed anyone's expectations, and were enhanced by both luck and bold action from him and his campaign team. And then it all came tumbling down. I would try to summarize the different strains of the Iowa experience this way: Did our loss have more to do with organizational failure—that is, the Iowa ground operation—or with communication? Clearly the latter.

Was paid media advertising more important as a factor in the demise than so-called “free” media coverage? No. Was Dean killed off by an establishment, including our opponents and the media, that was uncomfortable with or threatened by his persona and message? Or by voters who moved beyond those initially attractive elements to different criteria? Or by mistakes made by both him and his campaign team? I think by a little of everything, though I lean toward the middle answer as the most decisive. And John Kerry had become a pretty darn good candidate by the end of 2003.

To the specific charge from Thomas DeChastelain that the campaign staff did not “get it”: I like the almost Tolstoyan imagery of peasants attacking an empire—I imagine pulling out a scythe to rip through the unflattering newspaper articles that accumulated throughout 2003. Seriously, though, this is one of the hardest aspects of the Dean experience to convey to those on the outside, because although the major players agreed on how we should address the war and the need to give voice to the “Democratic wing of the Democratic Party,” we were uncertain—as was the candidate—about the question of “real change to the status quo.”

The best illustration of this is that since the primary season ended, Dean’s campaign manager, Joe Trippi, has said that “Dean didn’t believe in his own message,” and Dean himself has said that he should have shifted his tone to be more presidential by the fall of 2003—“safer,” to use Mr. DeChastelain’s term—and, presumably, less “rabble-rousing.” Yet Dean absolutely believed in the power of saying to voters, as he memorably did throughout the campaign, “You have the power.” I guess the best way to summarize it is that we were united when it came to the need to discuss empowerment, but not so much in sync about what that empowerment really should be. But I profoundly disagree that any of us were surprised by the nature and intensity of the attacks Dean’s candidacy generated; we were probably more surprised that they were so ineffective for so long.

To Nan Doyle: As you can see from Andrew Steele’s letter, Iowans were extremely anti-Iraq War, in every respect. The best evidence of this is the caucus results themselves—nearly nine in ten Iowans caucused for a candidate who had opposed

President Bush’s request for additional funding for Iraq (as Dean did and Kerry and Edwards did not). The one nuance that helped the two senators is that most Iowans had essentially traveled the same path as Kerry and Edwards: initially supportive and trusting of Bush, then more skeptical, and eventually very critical—so they actually more or less gave both men a pass when it came to their original vote to go to war. Dick Gephardt—the congressional leader Iowans knew best, and a more vocal supporter of the war—didn’t receive this free pass, and saw his candidacy hurt by the issue. The praise Dean initially received for his courage in standing against the war was replaced by a more skeptical attitude about his overall foreign-policy credentials combined with a feeling that “there’s no real difference” between the top candidates in terms of their basic messages.

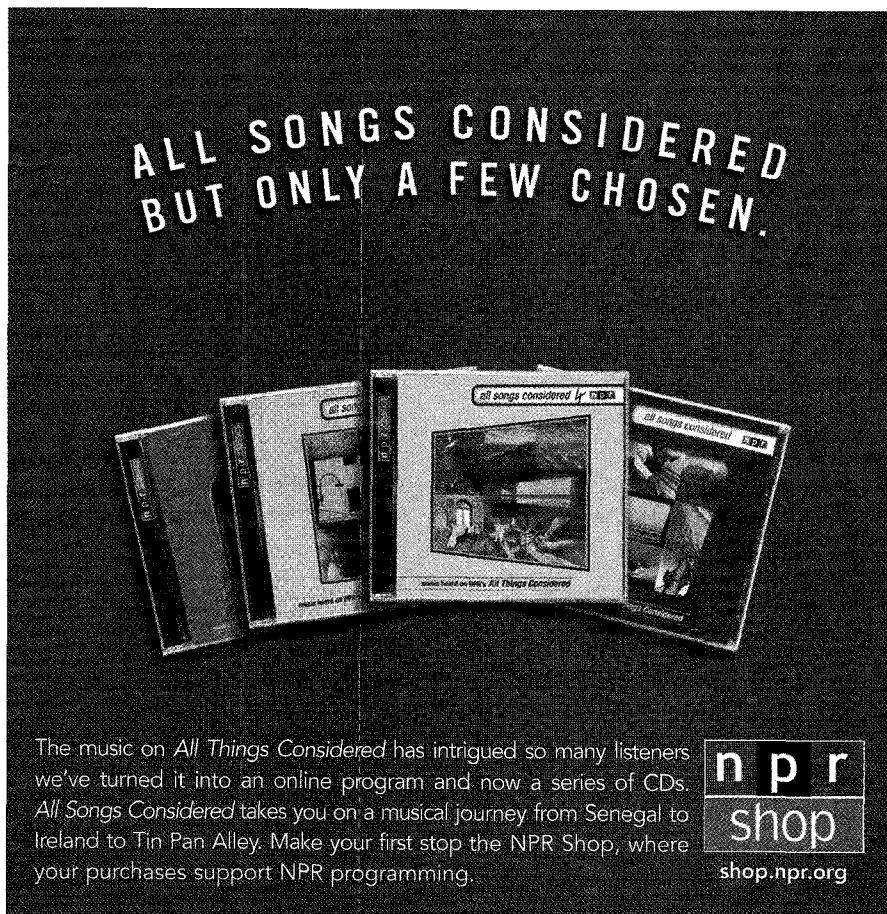
Homelessness Czar

Philip Mangano’s proposed solution to the problem of homelessness may be perfectly correct (“The Abolitionist,” by Douglas McGray, June *Atlantic*),

but surely it is legitimate to question the Bush Administration’s commitment to “research-and-data-driven, performance-based, and results-oriented” action when that Administration has taken exactly the opposite approach to terrorism, Iraq, climate change, missile defense, stem-cell research, air pollution, the morning-after pill, and the deficit.

Malcolm Pittman
Cambridge, Mass.

Philip Mangano’s brand of abolitionism may make for impassioned rhetoric, but it does little to appropriately honor our rich history or provide much of a road map out of homelessness. Rather than continue an American tradition of social justice, the Bush Administration has focused its efforts on what it calls “chronic” homelessness, suggesting a medical solution where an economic one is needed. This is an especially unconscionable strategy given the concurrent cuts to housing programs such as Section 8, which serves extremely low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled. It also conveniently shifts



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attention away from a larger, equally vulnerable population of people experiencing homelessness: young children. Without access to programs and services, they will surely become the “chronically homeless” of tomorrow.

Are there cost savings in what the Administration is peddling? Sure. But Dennis Culhane’s insolent observation that outreach workers and emergency-shelter managers are “threatened ideologically and financially” by the Administration’s shift in emphasis is loaded with bitter irony. Indeed, although a certain housing “industry” with a financial stake has steadily emerged in tandem with the current policies, providers of emergency shelter are hardly the beneficiaries of such a windfall. In fact it is Culhane’s own published research and consulting work that largely underpin the Bush Administration’s homelessness policy, and at the same time guarantee his place on the payroll and in the press. It is also a particularly insipid claim that people who provide emergency services are “threatened,” considering that a full one third of homeless families seeking shelter are turned away for lack of space.

In the end, neither liberals nor compassionate conservatives may offer new thinking on the issue, but to speak of liberal hegemony on national housing policy when the HUD budget has been slashed by 64 percent since 1978 is disingenuous at best. The abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison once cautioned not to “tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm.” Sadly, it seems the President’s homelessness czar has taken his good name and done precisely that.

Brad Paul
Executive Director
National Policy and Advocacy
Council on Homelessness
Washington, D.C.

Some six years ago, while working for Albuquerque HealthCare for the Homeless, I had a chance to see Philip Mangano address a group of advocates for the homeless. His energy and ability to understand the daily reality of that world, while maintaining a passionate vision, made for a man after my own heart. Though not wanting to leave my

place because of the excellent training and experience it offered, I would have gone to work for Mangano immediately. And still would. I’m an ex-junkie, but I’m an ex-junkie who likes to read, and hearing Mangano discuss *Les Misérables* and its message of redemption in front of a room full of college-degreed liberals was truly inspiring. Passion and vision, coupled with a willing attitude, will solve every problem we have. Though it pains me to say it, the Bush Administration is to be commended for following Mangano’s vision.

Jim Cioe
Bemidji, Minn.

Lessons of Abu Ghraib

Mark Bowden’s “Lessons of Abu Ghraib” (July/August *Atlantic*) raised several excellent points and represents one of the more balanced interpretations of the matter. Two points warrant clarification, though.

First, greater detail will be available as the investigations proceed, but it is important to caution against the oft made assertion that interrogation techniques that required the approval of higher authorities—as has been the case in both Iraq and Guantánamo—had anything to do with what was represented in those photos.

Second, the characterization of Secretary Rumsfeld’s mindset in the final paragraph is just wrong. Rumsfeld testified to Congress on May 7 that he found the photos “fundamentally un-American.” Those in the chain of command did in fact think the activities depicted in the photos were a “very big deal” (Bowden’s words), even before they saw the photos. That is why military commanders in Iraq immediately initiated criminal investigations when a soldier first reported the alleged abuses in January; why the facts of the case as they were known at the time were publicly announced in January and in March (well before the Taguba report and the photos were leaked to the press); and why several administrative investigations, parallel to the criminal investigations, were initiated to determine how widespread such activities might be.

There was no “long initial silence” in this matter. The Taguba report had been completed, and the process leading to the military equivalent of grand-jury investigations begun, prior to the release of the photos. It is understandable that the actual photos provided shock value well beyond that of any number of briefings, public announcements, and investigations, as thorough and as proper as they may have been.

Lawrence Di Rita
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Mark Bowden raises some good questions regarding the behavior of the prison guards and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s failure to address the issue before it was made public.

Rumsfeld’s complacency should have come as no surprise. Amnesty International, the Red Cross, and other organizations have been reporting in no uncertain terms on alleged instances of torture and other mistreatment of Iraqis by coalition forces during the past year. Furthermore, Amnesty International has since 2002 continually raised concerns with senior White House and Department of Defense officials regarding illegal interrogation practices used with prisoners at Guantánamo and elsewhere.

Therefore, what I find most disturbing is not Rumsfeld’s initial silence and apparent lack of concern for the abuse of prisoners, which is clearly nothing new. Rather, it is the fact that no one in the Bush Administration chose to address the issue until the pictures hit the television screens and informed the world of what was happening.

One wonders what other atrocities may remain hidden behind the Bush Administration’s shield of secrecy.

Mary T. Shaw
Amnesty International USA
Norristown, Pa.

“Lessons of Abu Ghraib” included an interesting phrase: “The photos from Abu Ghraib prison portray Americans as exactly the sexually obsessed, crude, arrogant, godless . . .” Since when is being godless such a bad trait? The

last time I checked, we were at war with religious extremists who are *not* godless. I would prefer any day to live in a world full of godless people.

*Vickie Sandell Stangl
Wichita, Kans.*

“Lessons of Abu Ghraib” reminded me of a point I haven’t seen anyone take up. I recall seeing Senator James Inhofe speaking at some committee hearing shortly after the tape of Nicholas Berg’s execution was released. He said that the pictures of abuse at Abu Ghraib depicted the aberrant acts of a few rotten apples, and that the people of Iraq should not lower their opinion of Americans because of them. He said that not all American soldiers should be lumped in with those in the photographs. But in the very next breath he said, of Berg’s killing, *That’s just the kind of people that we’re dealing with over there* (I am paraphrasing).

I am not trying to draw a parallel between the actions of U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib and those of the men who killed Berg. I do cringe, though, at the double standard. Whereas Inhofe’s first remark doubtless did little or nothing to improve Iraqis’ opinions of Americans, I expect his second one did quite a lot of damage.

*Ted Ridgway
Sacramento, Calif.*

Mark Bowden comments that “the President has spoken out against torture” and goes on to mention reports that Administration lawyers last year codified “the ‘aggressive’ methods of interrogation permitted at U.S. detention facilities.” If those reports are true, he writes, the lawyers “effectively authorized in advance the use of coercion.”

Bowden is correct; Bush did speak out against torture—but not until after the use of such torture became known worldwide. A number of months ago, when Attorney General John Ashcroft publicly stated that torture might well be justified (a convoluted way of telling us that it would be used), Bush did *not* speak out—thus giving it his tacit approval and authorization. As of June 8 *The New York Times* had obtained a copy of a fifty-six-page confiden-

tial memo, prepared by those Justice Department lawyers in March of 2003, stating that as Commander-in-Chief, Bush is not bound to ban torture.

Bowden concludes that maybe Rumsfeld simply wasn’t shocked. It seems fair to assume that he was not shocked, since the Abu Ghraib photos depicted only what had already received Justice Department, Pentagon, and White House approval.

*Patricia M. Koster
Williston, Fla.*

Faux Meat

By the time I got to the end of B. R. Myers’s book review “Nasty, Brutish, and Short” (April *Atlantic*), I had to check the cover to make sure I hadn’t mistakenly picked up some PETA tract. Does Myers seriously think he’ll win meat eaters over to vegetarianism by comparing them to child molesters? Or was the review meant as a parody of PETA’s extremism?

Leaving aside the fact that the human race evolved as omnivores and that we

most likely would never have acquired our highly proficient brains through vegetarianism, no soy product could ever replicate to any degree a perfectly barbecued steak. I was a vegetarian for many years, and I was never fooled by any of the faux meats. And anyway, if I’m going to eat vegetables, I’ll eat them as vegetables; I’m not going to pretend they’re meat. But after my husband and I bought a house and a gas grill, I found myself salivating over what I’d given up in college in a fit of youthful idealism. Besides, what’s the point of having fought our way to the top of the food chain just to give it all up for soyburgers?

*Linda Felaco
Silver Spring, Md.*

B. R. Myers replies:

In my piece I conceded that faux meat is “just not the same.” I also argued that the choice to forgo it for the real, blood-dripping thing, like the choice to molest a child, comes down to a person’s deciding that a perceived increase in pleasure justifies making another being suffer. In missing this point Linda Felaco ends up proving it, since her argument for

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eating meat can easily be transposed into a defense of child molestation: cavemen did it, and it's fun for the party that has fought its way "to the top"—so why not? In all the excitement of owning a gas grill, Felaco has forgotten what she knew in college: that our highly proficient brains evolved to do more than trigger our saliva.

Sinking the *Estonia*

Having just returned from Greece, where I rode several inter-island ferries, I read William Langewiesche's hair-raising "A Sea Story" (May *Atlantic*) with great interest. Langewiesche said nothing, however, about the design of the openable bow that led to the sinking of the *Estonia* or, more important, about what lessons were learned and what, if any, changes were made.

The designers of the Greek ferries seem to have gotten it right. The boats employ huge doors at the stern that are hinged at the bottom and swing down from the top, thus providing a ramp for vehicles and passengers. The boats have thrusters that allow them to enter a small island port, turn 180 degrees on a dime, and back into the dock—all in a matter of seconds and without tugs or other assistance. It is quite an amazing operation, given the enormous size of the craft.

*Bruce Haxthausen
New York, N.Y.*

William Langewiesche writes that the ferry *Estonia*'s engines were "fully throttled up." None of the more than a hundred fishing vessels I have been on has ever "fully throttled up" its engines while I have been aboard—I presume for reasons of engine life and fuel efficiency. Did the *Estonia* actually run at its full horsepower? Is this practice usual for ferries and other nonfishing boats? Or was it careless and reckless?

*Michael Pol
Carver, Mass.*

William Langewiesche is always able to paint vivid pictures with his words. But after reading the *Estonia* article I was left with many unanswered questions. How did anybody survive in mountainous seas while clinging only

to debris flung off the ship? How were they rescued? Were there repercussions for the owners or the builders of the *Estonia*, given that the loading doors were defective or improperly closed? Are similar oceangoing ferries safer today because of this tragedy?

*Mark Canavan
Mt. Prospect, Ill.*

Editors' Note:

Many technical issues about the sinking of the Estonia, along with a discussion of ferry safety and the legal regime that governs shipping, can be found in William Langewiesche's new book, The Outlaw Sea: A World of Freedom, Chaos, and Crime.

Advice & Consent

Reading William F. Buckley's piece "Aweigh" (July/August *Atlantic*) reminded me that before my books started getting published, I supported my writing addiction by refinishing brightwork on yachts. After carefully studying my clients and their cohorts, and in an effort to assist them even further, I wrote an open letter to the head of the American Psychiatric Association in a vain attempt to have him recognize recreational boat owners (RBOs) as mentally disturbed. After all, any group that sees its heads as toilets definitely needs help. Buckley's essay about selling his sailboat—often referred to as the second happiest day of an RBO's life, the first being the day it was bought—adds proof to my contention that this subgroup of RBOs, sailboat owners, suffer the worst. They constantly demonstrate classic passive-aggressive signs by not sailing with the wind but, rather, avoiding such a course with sly manipulations they call "tacking." They become models of self-victimization, with traces of a persecution complex, when they encounter no wind: they call that state being "in irons." And they show their grandiosity by terming bow platforms "pulpits" and motorized yachts "stink pots." I shall redouble my efforts by citing Buckley's essay.

*Fredric Alan Maxwell
Ann Arbor, Mich.*

I enjoyed Joshua Green's article on campaign advertising ("Dumb and Dumber," July/August *Atlantic*). What was lacking, however, was an explanation of why negative advertising is more effective today.

Green explains that current campaign advertising is actually similar to that of the 1950s (Ike brought Madison Avenue specialists into the presidential campaign). If so, then why are negative ads more effective today than in the past? Clearly the number of negative ads has increased markedly since the 1950s.

I think the answer lies in research data familiar to those who study U.S. elections—data suggesting a decline of the political party. Up until the 1970s party identification tended to be an important clue to how voters made decisions. The political party provided, in the words of cognitive psychologists, an important shortcut to decision-making. When political-party membership became less important than success in political primaries, voters typically began to pay more attention to political advertising. At about the same time, not surprisingly, the number of negative ads began to increase. Instead of the party, voters now used political advertising as a shortcut to decision-making. And, as Green notes, negative advertising is very effective.

*Christopher S. Kelley
Oxford, Ohio*

In his "Wonders Never Cease" (July/August *Atlantic*), Cullen Murphy performs a public service by noting that mortality from cancer of the colon can be greatly reduced by regular checkups for people over the age of fifty. Unfortunately, he then goes on to describe colonoscopy as "profoundly unpleasant."

I have had two colonoscopies, and they are on a par with having one's teeth cleaned, not "profoundly unpleasant." The preparation is something that an adult should be able to take in stride; the patient is asleep during the procedure itself; and patients experience no discomfort at all after the procedure. A colonoscopy is not a big deal.

I should have had a colonoscopy when I turned fifty, but I didn't—partly because it was easy to procrastinate and

partly because I believed what I read about how disagreeable the procedure was. I finally had one when I was fifty-four, and was given a diagnosis of colon cancer. Because I had waited so long, the cancer had spread to my lungs. Now, after surgery and two years of chemotherapy, I still have cancer. A colonoscopy at fifty would have caught the cancer at a relatively early stage, the polyps could have been snipped out, and I would be fine today.

Cullen Murphy and other authors have no responsibility to preach the gospel of early colonoscopies. And it is the responsibility of people like me to get colonoscopies when they should. But if an author is going to write about colonoscopies, he should present an accurate picture.

*Name Withheld
Nashville, Ill.*

Robert J. Spitzer (Letters to the Editor, June *Atlantic*) elegantly demonstrates the gun-averse attitude common in the social sciences over the past two or three generations. Constitutional scholars, on the other hand, on both left and right, have established a "standard model" of interpretation of the Second Amendment, rediscovering the understanding of the first five generations after its adoption. In *Presser v. United States* (1886), the Supreme Court opined that the inapplicability of the Second Amendment to state action notwithstanding, states could not infringe upon their citizens' right to keep and bear arms, lest the federal government be denied the services of armed private citizens in what is now called in federal law the "unorganized militia" (all men of military age not in active service or the National Guard—with a few exceptions—and some women). Even during World War II more than half the states called on privately armed individuals to guard vital areas and facilities. Further, federal law authorizes states to form defense forces outside the National Guard and the Naval Militia (together the "organized militia of the United States"). And then there's the *posse comitatus*, most famously activated by a Colorado sheriff after the notorious Ted Bundy escaped jail.

Contrary to even some current opinion, a wealth of contemporaneous information is available regarding the intent of the Founders and their generation concerning an armed citizenry, which has only been amplified by extensive Fourteenth Amendment scholarship.

Professor Spitzer even manages to underestimate Congress's intent when it passed the Brady Law: "No department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States may ... require that any record or portion thereof generated by the ... National Instant Check System be recorded at or transferred to a facility owned, managed, or controlled by the United States or any State or political subdivision thereof." It also prohibits establishing "any system for the registration of firearms, firearm owners or firearm transactions or dispositions" except for those persons prohibited from receiving a firearm. Even Ashcroft's twenty-four-hour "compromise" arguably violates the law, but Spitzer wants to ignore it entirely.

If he doesn't like the Second Amendment and the Brady Law, he

must hate the New York Civil Rights Law. It contains the exact wording of the amendment, except that "cannot" is substituted for "shall not." Maybe he doesn't fully agree with the common understanding of a "civil right" either. The American Civil Liberties Union certainly does not, holding that any individual right to possess arms may extend only to the privacy of one's home. Since when is self-defense a "privacy right"? Since *Roe v. Wade*, I guess.

*William J. Durr
Cornwallville, N.Y.*

Mark Steyn, whose name looks Netherlandish, seems not to know much Netherlandish history when he writes that with the loss of the Dutch East Indies, "Juliana became the first Queen of the Netherlands in almost half a millennium to be reduced to being Queen merely of the Netherlands" ("The Prototypical Bicycling Monarch," June *Atlantic*). A Netherlands monarchy had existed only since 1815, before which members of the House of Orange-Nassau were Stadtholders of some or



The Clinton Riddle

Edited by Todd G. Shields, Jeannie M. Whayne, and Donald R. Kelley

Foreword by David H. Pryor,
former Arkansas governor and
U.S. senator

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all of the United Provinces, a sort of stand-in for a nonexistent monarch who before the Dutch Revolt against Spain might have been a Hapsburg and afterward was a purely fictitious personage. The Dutch had in fact lived in republican fashion since the medieval period, whatever the name of their nominal rulers might have been.

*Norman Ravitch
Savannah, Ga.*

Nathan Littlefield writes in "Rich, Famous, Incarcerated" (June *Atlantic*) that the Reverend James Bakker was sentenced to forty-five years for fraud. True, but an appellate court found that Judge Potter, whose nickname is "Maximum Bob," had abused his discretion by referring to his own religious principles when he stated: "He [Bakker] had no thought whatever about his victims and those of us who do have a religion are ridiculed as being saps from money-grubbing preachers or priests." The prosecutor unsuccessfully argued during the appeal that "those of us" referred not to the judge himself but to society.

The appellate court ordered resentencing before a new judge, who gave Bakker eighteen years. Bakker did four years and was released for six months in a halfway house. Parole from federal sentences has long since been abolished, and strict sentence guidelines have led to a harsh "truth in sentencing."

*Peter Lushing
Far Hills, N. J.*

Iwould like to thank you and compliment Martha Spaulding for the exceptional article on John P. Marquand ("Martini-Age Victorian," May *Atlantic*). For quite a while I was fairly certain I was the last person left in North America still reading Marquand's works. It is gratifying to know that there is at least one other member of this small and exclusive (as Marquand undoubtedly would have preferred) club. Marquand was a great author (through the 1940s and 1950s he had more best sellers than Hemingway or Steinbeck, and in 1943 *So Little Time* outsold both *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *The Human Comedy*) in that his gift of nuance had readers reading as much between the lines as he had

put on the actual page. And although some of his works are better than others (*Timothy Dexter, Revisited* is practically unreadable), it is a shame that his best works are to a large extent completely forgotten today, despite an appeal that should transcend time and history. How many former soldiers in America today might identify with Jeffrey Wilson in *So Little Time* as they ponder their frustrated inability to "do something" after September 11, and watch as their son or daughter leaves home to fight in Iraq or Afghanistan?

*Thomas Hall
Montclair, Va.*

Regarding Mercille Wells's comment on Aryn Kyle's May story, "Foaling Season" (Letters to the Editor, July/August *Atlantic*): The scleras of all horses are white. You just can't see the white unless they roll their eyes in excitement or fright, as in Kyle's story. An appaloosa is described as having white scleras when an easily seen white area completely encircles the iris of the eye. But visible scleras, partially or completely surrounding the iris, occur in many breeds—I have seen the characteristic in quarter horses, thoroughbreds, and Arabians.

*Marisa Samuels
Walnut Creek, Calif.*

Sandra Tsing Loh's review of Paco Underhill's *Call of the Mall* ("Shopworn," June *Atlantic*) begins with a quotation from the book: "Increasingly, cities are becoming the province of the rich, the childless, or the poor." Virtually the same statement was made by the sociologist William Whyte Jr. in his introduction to the influential 1958 collection *The Exploding Metropolis*, an examination of the suburban boom that sparked mall culture. Whyte wrote that the American city was "becoming a place of extremes—a place for the very poor, or the very rich, or the slightly odd." Moreover, like Underhill, Whyte admitted that he and his collaborators were "people that like cities," but he acknowledged that the suburbs were becoming "the norm of American aspiration." How little some things have changed.

*Matthew Farish
Toronto, Ontario*

Regarding Stewart B. Herman's letter about Maya MacGuineas's "Radical Tax Reform" (Letters to the Editor, May *Atlantic*): Putting aside the arrogant tone, Herman makes some valid points and should be congratulated for making the most of the opportunities offered to him. He states that he spent years without an income while he was preparing himself for a professional career. During that time someone had to clothe him, feed him, provide for transportation, insurance, housing, and tuition. Someone also taught him to make the right choices with those opportunities.

Wouldn't it be nice if we were all afforded the opportunity to make such choices? As for the underclasses Herman derides, say what you want about their choices, but don't confuse choice with opportunity.

*Roger Falasco
Solon, Ohio*

Re "Greed on Trial," by Alex Beam (June *Atlantic*): Articles on trial attorneys' fees miss the point; Beam makes no reference to society's increasing need to rely on the private bar for justice, or to monitor corporate behavior. The article might have included information, for example, about how many complaints concerning patient care against physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, HMOs, and laboratories are actually investigated and go to hearing. The few that go forward under the auspices of state regulation rarely go to full hearing. Less tax money, fewer civil servants, and more complaints induce state agencies to make ludicrous settlements so that they can reduce an overwhelming caseload. Often the cost of corporations' own trial attorneys is a greater financial penalty on corporate behavior than any fines that might be imposed. Without the accountability occasionally imposed by private lawsuits, corporate abusers would go scot-free. Perhaps if Massachusetts had had enough resources, its attorney general's office could have handled much of the trial preparation in-house.

*Harriet Katz
Las Vegas, Nev.*

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Our stories cannot be told in a vacuum.
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Landmarks in ...



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1916

Saturday Evening Post runs first Norman Rockwell cover. Rockwell goes on to create 321 *Saturday Evening Post* covers over 47 years.

1929

Yo-yo reinvented as an American fad. Congress later finds Abbie Hoffman in contempt for "walking the dog" while testifying.

American football kicks off.

1879

New York City Subway opens.

1904

19th Amendment grants women the right to vote.

1920

Air conditioning invented.

1932

Mount Rushmore completed.

1941

American Memory

1922

Vacuum cleaners first used to clean White House carpets. Just over 30 years later, Eisenhower

famously trades Oval Office carpeting for cork flooring. The reason? A private putting green and one spiky pair of golf cleats.



Cleaning History

1893

Mop patented.

1901

Vacuum cleaner invented. Like small fire trucks, early vacuums are parked curbside and operated by teams of four to six people.

1897

Modern dustpan introduced.



Electrolux introduces the Model V, considered one of the first "modern" vacuum cleaners. Its innovative sleigh-like runners provide ease of movement around the house.

1921



z30 vacuum cleaner released by Electrolux. The model's contemporary streamlined design earns it the nickname "the loaf."

1938

1945

Microwave oven invented. Raytheon's Percy Spencer makes the accidental discovery when a candy bar melts in his pocket.



First Levittown developed. By the end of its construction in 1951, it becomes the largest planned community ever built by a single builder.

1947

Color TV introduced.

1951

Hula Hoop invented.

1958

1961

Peace Corps established. Announced at a JFK campaign stop in 1960, the program grows to draw 170,000 volunteers and touch 136 host countries.



Woodstock music festival.

1969

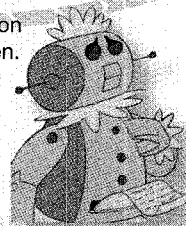
Swimmer Mark Spitz wins 7 gold medals at Munich Olympics.

1972

1962

The Jetsons cartoon lights up the screen. Cantankerous

yet lovable housekeeping robot Rosie cleans her way into the Jetsons' hearts as well as our own, despite appearing in only two original episodes.



1959

"Hints from Heloise" column debuts in the *Honolulu Advertiser*.



First unattended 24-hour laundromat opens its doors.

1949



Luxomatic vacuum cleaner introduced with a range of futuristic features: a winding cord, a self-sealing bag (made of paper), and an indicator to show when the bag is full.

1964



1977

Saturday Night Fever premiers. Film critic Gene Siskel later becomes one-time owner of Travolta's signature white disco suit, since sold at auction for a cool \$145,000.

Clean sweep: Lance Armstrong wins record sixth straight Tour de France.

2004

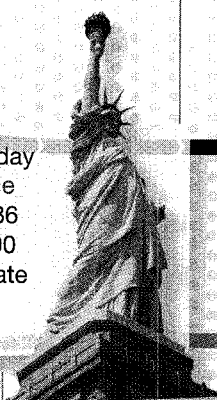
Hubble telescope launches.

1990

Personal computer introduced.

1981

1986 100th Birthday of the Statue of Liberty. During the 1986 restoration, more than 100 tons of sodium bicarbonate are used to clean the statue's innards.



Self-cleaning windows make American debut.

2001

Electrolux becomes the world's #1 choice in vacuum cleaners.

1974

The Electrolux Group celebrates 75th Anniversary.

1994



Electrolux breaks new ground with Trilobite robotic vacuum cleaner.

2004

Electrolux reintroduced to U.S. retail market.

2003

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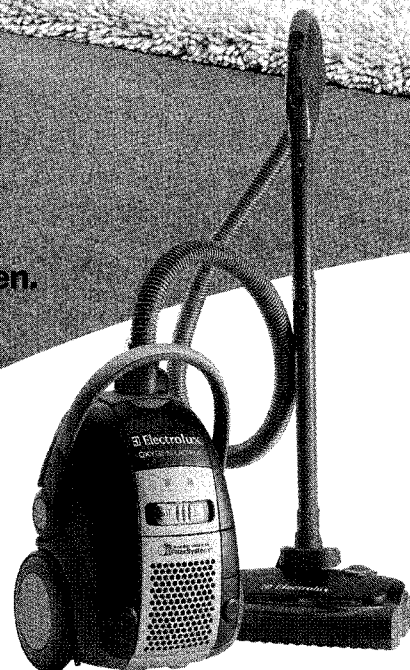
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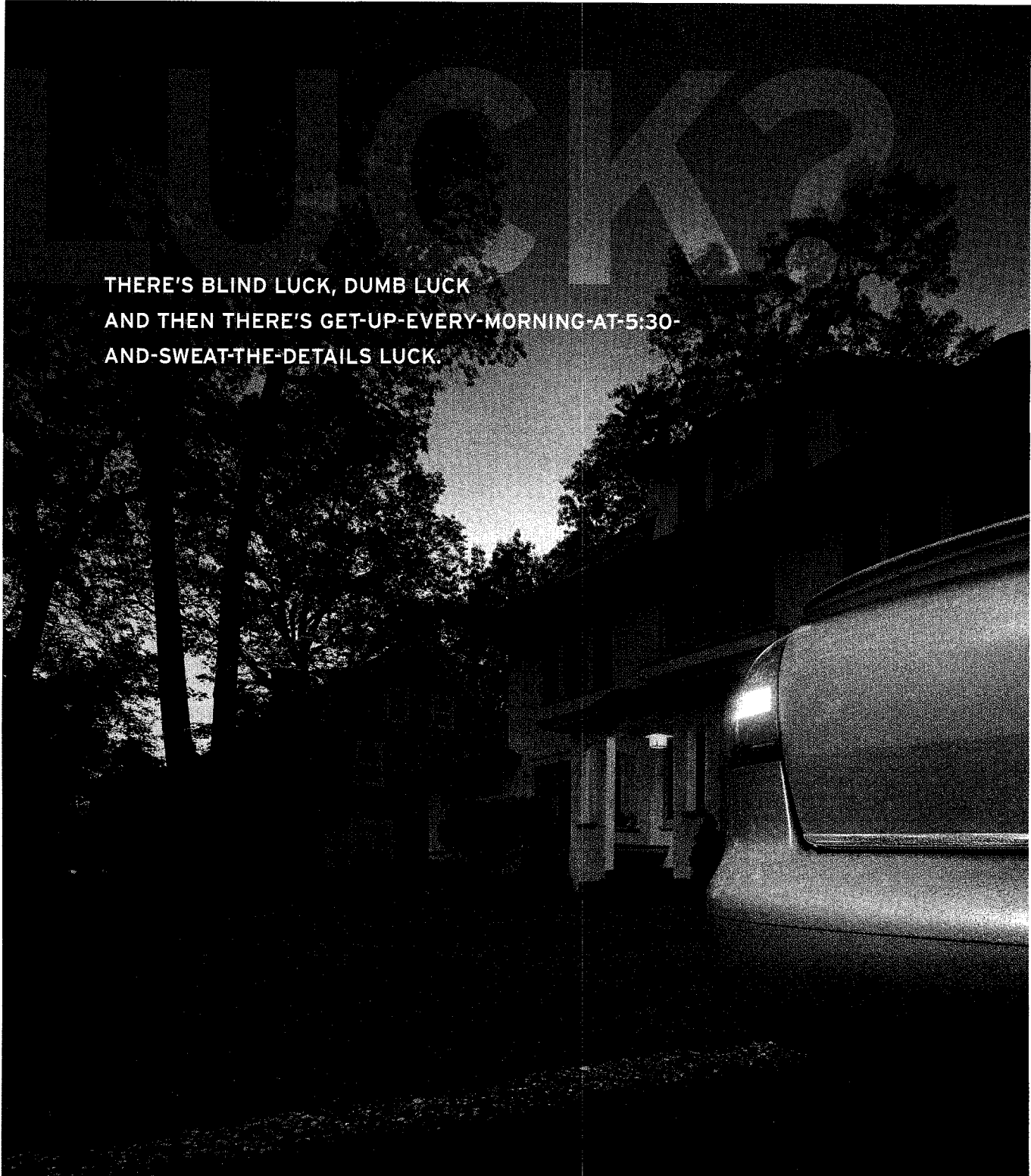
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THE AGENDA

OCTOBER 2004 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

THIS MONTH:

The X Factor

How will the irrepressible Teresa Heinz Kerry affect her husband's election chances?

PAGE 44

The List

Why Yahoo charges less for "penis pump" than for "personal injury lawyer"

PAGE 48

Suspended Sentencing

The consequences of "the single most irresponsible decision in the modern history of the Supreme Court"

PAGE 50

"To Hell With Lipitor!"

P. J. O'Rourke explains the Medicare prescription-drug benefit

PAGE 56

Tick, Tick, Tick

Defusing Pakistan, the world's greatest nuclear threat to America

PAGE 58

The Odds

The next Pope, as predicted by Irish bookmakers

PAGE 59

Primary Sources

How gay marriage could reduce the federal deficit; assigning a grade level to presidential debates; and other recent reports

PAGE 62

World in Numbers

Mapping the explosion in international phone traffic

PAGE 66

COMMENT

Divided We Stand

Republicans and Democrats should be careful what they wish for

BY JONATHAN RAUCH

George W. Bush is not the President he wanted to be. In 2000 he campaigned, famously, as "a uniter, not a divider," and by all indications he was perfectly sincere. As the governor of Texas he prided himself on finding common ground with the state's Democrats. But in the White House he proved to be a polarizer like no other President in memory.

What turned Bush into a divider? Not the Iraq War, or at least not only that. The war was certainly divisive, but it mainly divided Democrats. The Democratic Senate, after all, approved the war resolution, and John Kerry and John Edwards both voted for it (as did a majority of Senate Democrats and Richard Gephardt, the House minority leader). Nor is it the case, whatever Michael Moore may say, that Bush has governed as a conservative extremist. For every gift to conservatives (aggressive tax cuts, support for faith-based community groups, support for missile defense, abandonment of the global-warming treaty, restrictions on fetal stem-cell research) there has been a measure to offend them (campaign-finance reform, a giant new prescription-drug entitlement, the No Child Left Behind education law, an anti-market farm bill, anti-market steel tariffs, dizzyingly profligate federal spending). In truth, Bush looks less like Ronald Reagan than like Richard Nixon, a conservative who was consistent not in his conservatism but in his determination to poach all the best political real estate, wherever it lay. Like Nixon, but even more so, Bush is more polarizing than his policies. Why?

Bill Clinton recently offered a nugget of insight. In an interview in July with *Rolling Stone* magazine, he suggested that Bush and the Republicans blundered in 2002 by going all out to win control of the Senate and thus of Congress as a whole. (The Republicans have firmly controlled the House since 1995, whereas the Senate has recently been up for grabs.) "President Bush would have been far better off in his re-election if he'd let the natural rhythm of 2002 unfold and let the Democrats pick up a few seats," Clinton mused. "We would have held the Senate and maybe increased our margin by one or two; the House would be very close. But it would have compelled him to take a more moderate position."

The voters like divided government (shorthand for when one party controls the White House and the other controls at least one

house of Congress). That is what they tell pollsters, and that is how they vote, having given control of both branches to one party in fewer than five of the past twenty-four years (1993–1994, half of 2001, and 2003–2004). And divided control seems to work fine. In 1991 the Yale University political scientist David R. Mayhew, in a book called *Divided We Govern*, looked carefully at the whole postwar period and concluded that, all else being equal, “unified party control contributes nothing to the volume of important enactments.” More recently William A. Niskanen, the chairman of the libertarian Cato Institute and formerly the acting chairman of Reagan’s Council of Economic Advisers, argued that divided government helps restrain government spending and produces lasting reforms.

Unified control of the government pushes policy to unsustainable extremes, poisons politics, and embitters politicians and voters.

This may not be surprising, given the different dynamics of divided and unified control. Divided control compels each party to frame a governing agenda and then forces the parties to negotiate if anything is to be accomplished. The result is to drag both parties toward the center. Unified control, in contrast, tempts the dominant party to govern from its own center rather than the country’s, leaving the excluded party to hiss and spit from the sidelines.

In 1981 a band of conservative House Democrats gave Reagan’s Republicans effective (though not formal) control of both chambers of Congress. Carried away, Congress passed an even larger tax cut than Reagan had intended, while also increasing federal spending (notably on defense). Luckily for Reagan, the following year the Democratic leadership re-established control of the House. During the rest of his presidency the Democrats used their leverage to moderate his tax cuts

and defense increases. They thereby put Reaganism on a sustainable footing and made Reagan himself look good. With the help of the Democrats, Reagan won re-election in a walk and left office with approval ratings well above 60 percent. Divided control also produced the 1986 tax reform, the great reform of the era.

In 1992 the voters placed both branches in the Democrats’ hands. Clinton and Congress passed a brave budget that helped break the deficit’s back, and the President reached out to Republicans to pass the North American Free Trade Agreement; but then the Democrats went too far, with a partisan health-care initiative that was too complicated and grandiose either to work or, as it turned out, to pass. Luckily for Clinton, in 1994 an angry elec-

torate gave Congress to the Republicans. No longer hostage to his party’s liberal congressional leadership, Clinton was free to tack to the center, which he dominated for six years. With the help of the Republi-

cans, Clinton won re-election in a walk and left office with approval ratings well above 60 percent. Divided control also produced the 1996 welfare reform—the great reform of *that* era.

Bush’s tenure, of course, has run the Reagan-Clinton tape in reverse. For most of Bush’s first two years Democrats controlled the Senate. The result was a series of bipartisan reforms, mostly centrist: campaign-finance reform, corporate-governance reform, the anti-terror Patriot Act. Had matters continued in that vein, Bush’s position today might be quite different. In 2002, however, Republicans won the Senate.

For Republicans, governing now meant working as a team against the Democrats. Congressional Republicans and the White House egged each other on instead of reining each other in. The country desperately needed new laws to create some sort of regular process by which suspected terrorists and “enemy combatants” could be detained before they committed atrocities.

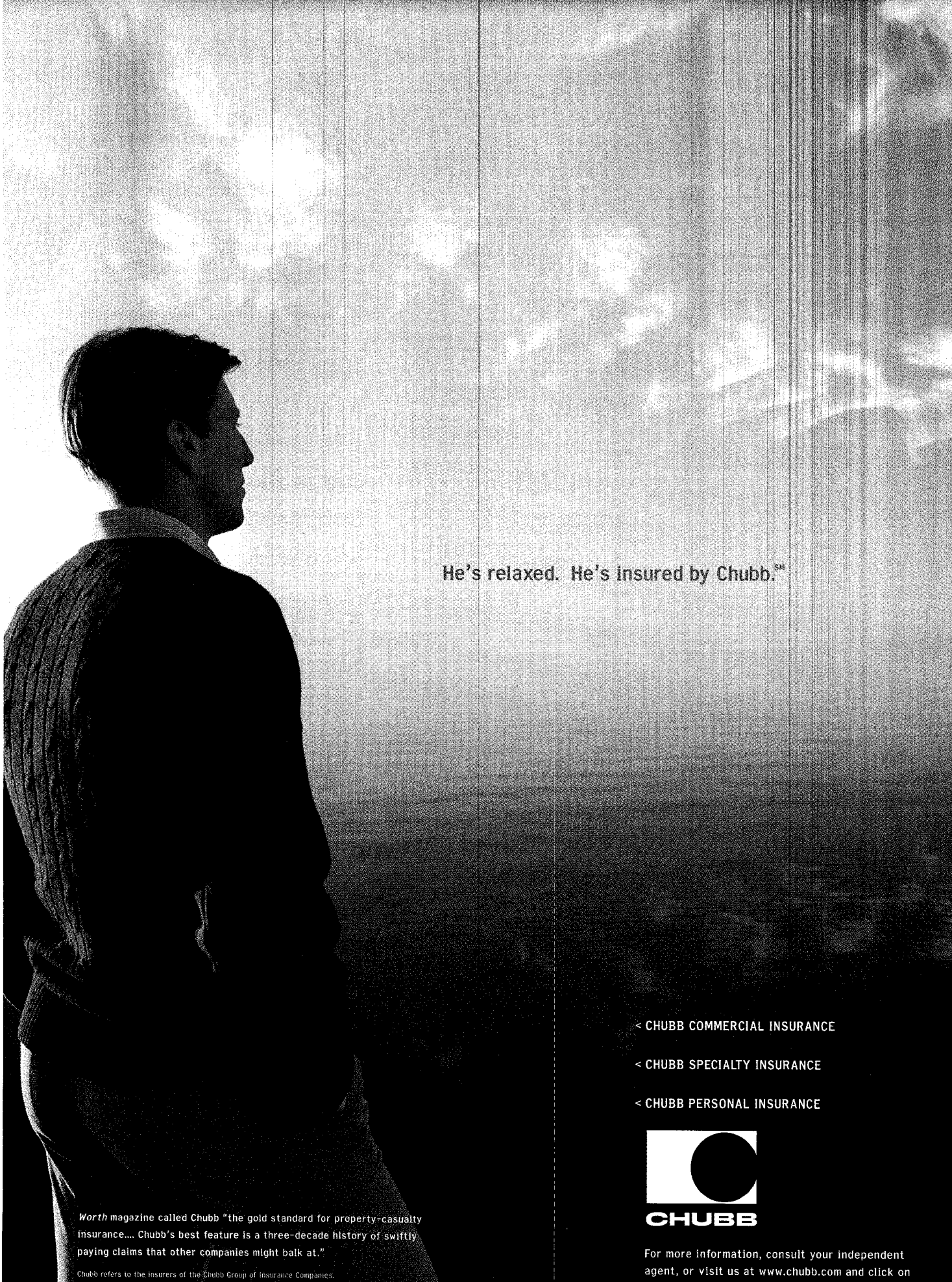
Writing such laws should have been Congress’s job, but when Bush asserted near dictatorial powers to lock up even U.S. citizens indefinitely, congressional Republicans had no appetite to confront their party’s leader. Congressional Republicans were in the mood to spend money and run up deficits. Restraining them should have been the President’s job, but Bush had no desire to split his party.

Sometimes Bush did reach toward the center. He championed that expensive new drug benefit for Medicare, for example. What he found, however, was that moderation won him no love in either party. The Democrats, excluded and bitter, wanted to bury Bush, not to praise him. The Republicans, whose partisans are well to the right of the electorate as a whole, were angry with Bush for compromising conservative principles. And so the center lost its constituency. In this harsh environment Bush himself hardened, until at last President Bush seemed a stranger to Governor Bush.

The lesson is pretty clear. Unified control pushes policy to unsustainable extremes, poisons politics, and embitters politicians and voters. Divided control, in contrast, draws policy toward the center; and by giving both parties a stake in governing, it can lower the political temperature so that even daring changes (tax reform, welfare reform) *seem* moderate. In other words, divided control makes the country more governable.

If Bush is re-elected in November, he should hope the Democrats win the Senate. The House seems beyond the Democrats’ grasp, and so divided control appears assured if Kerry is elected—something Kerry can be thankful for. American elections are zero-sum games, with a loser for every winner. But this year there is one win-win-win outcome—good for both parties, good for both branches, and good for the country. Come November, I’ll be voting for President, but I’ll be praying for divided control. ■

Jonathan Rauch is a correspondent for The Atlantic and a senior writer for National Journal. His most recent book, Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America (2004), was excerpted in these pages.



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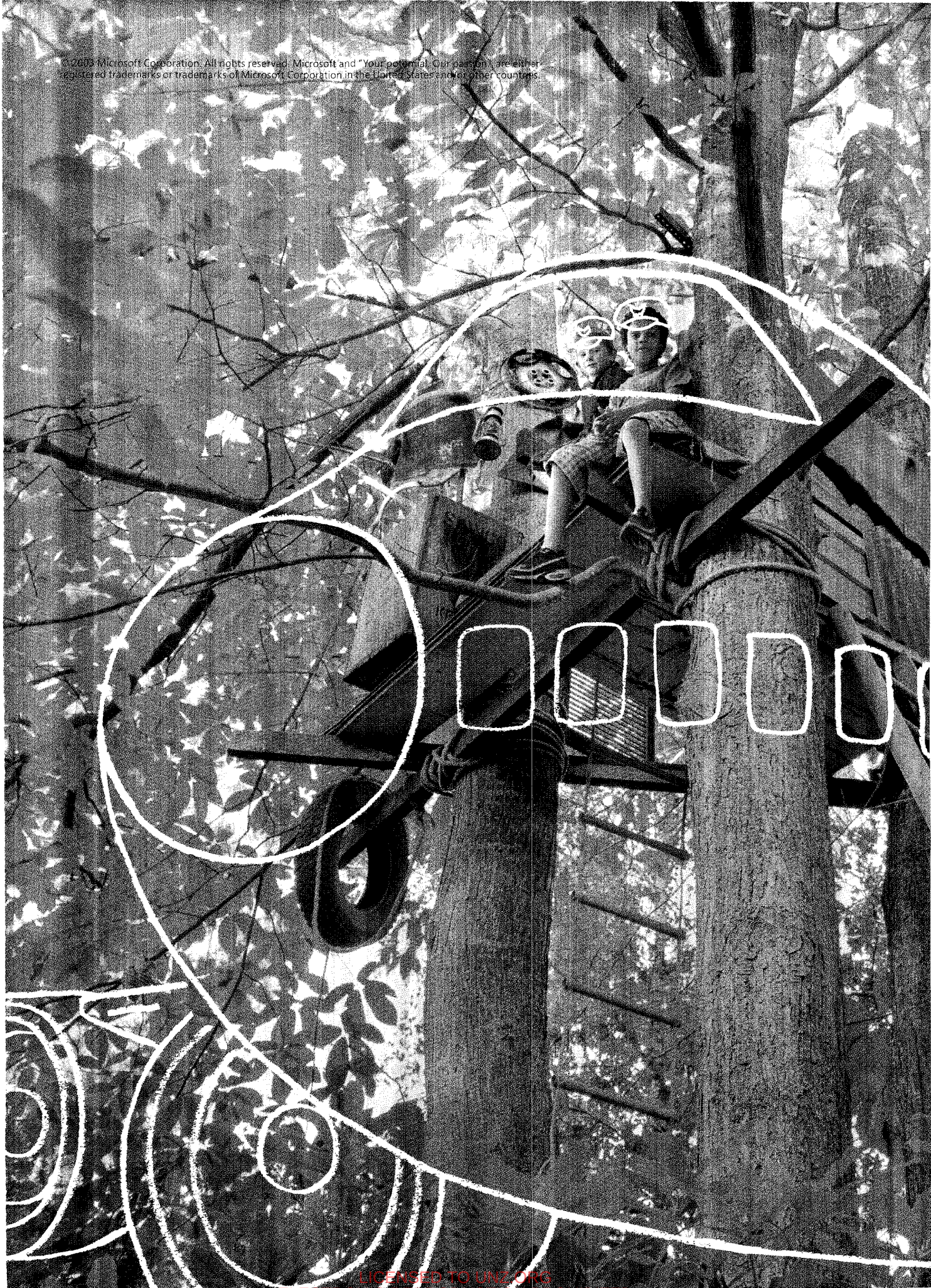
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The X Factor

Americans probably care less about Teresa Heinz Kerry's outspokenness than about her exoticism. The question is what they think of it

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

Teresa Heinz Kerry is standing in the middle of a Wendy's fast-food restaurant, clutching a tiny container of chili and a bright-yellow cup of soda. She is wearing a smart brown pantsuit and a pale-pink blouse with its collar spread wide. Today is John and Elizabeth Edwards's twenty-seventh wedding anniversary, and the entire Kerry-Edwards campaign has halted its cross-country bus tour in sleepy Newburgh, New York, to let the lovebirds enjoy their traditional celebratory burgers and fries. Teresa, clearly new to Wendy's, eases her way through the crowd to join the Edwardses. She smiles gamely at her curious fellow diners. She reaches down to ruffle the dark hair of a small boy perched in a booster chair. She resembles nothing so much as a debutante at a tractor pull.

For months now the entire political world has been waiting (Republicans eagerly, Democrats anxiously) for the unscripted, uncontrollable wife of John Kerry to say or do something so outrageous that it alters the dynamics of the presidential race. Fueling expectations, every few weeks Teresa (as much of America has come to know her) lets fly another zinger—such as when she questioned the patriotism of the current President and Vice President, or when, on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, she was caught on camera telling an impertinent reporter to “shove it.” In a Democratic campaign being run with the utmost caution, Teresa has been publicly deemed an “X factor” and a “loose cannon.”

Barring some truly over-the-top outburst, however, Teresa's mouthiness will probably matter less than how her offbeat persona plays into voters' views about her husband. Like running mates, political spouses have meaning and

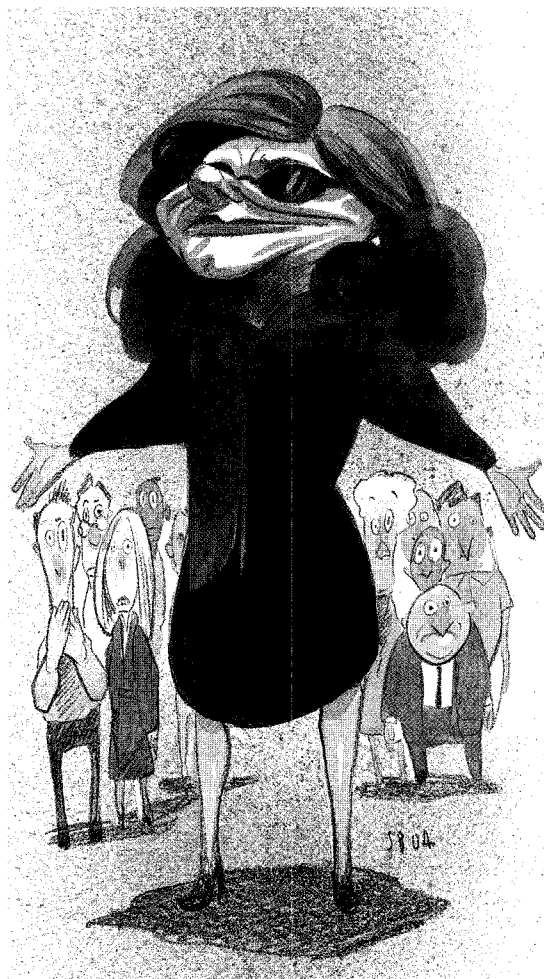
impact largely in the way they reflect on the candidates themselves. Opinions vary as to how Teresa may confirm or confound the conventional wisdom about her husband. Democrats hope her spunk will combat Kerry's image as an aloof, dull-as-mud equivocator. (Surely it takes a strong, self-assured man to keep up with a spitfire like “T,” as friends call her.) Republicans hope that her eye-popping wealth will help them tar Kerry as an out-of-touch elitist, and that her outspokenness will raise the question of who wears the pants in their household. (What kind of man puts up with that sort of sass anyway?) There's little question, however, that

the irrepressible Teresa (pronounced Tuh-ray-za, much to the delight of Republicans) serves to highlight how very not average the Kerry family is. As one Democratic strategist put it, “My thought has always been that to the extent Kerry seems slightly odd and different from the rest of us, Teresa accentuates that.”

One of the more surprising things about Teresa is how quietly she speaks. Despite her bomb-throwing reputation, her voice is low, throaty, and heavily accented in a sexy, Sophia Loren kind of way. It stays soft and measured even when she's discussing what it's like to be labeled “outspoken,” “opinionated,” “tough,” and even “crazy” by the chattering classes.

“That's one thing about expectations for women on the campaign trail,” Teresa explains to me. “If I were at a conference with colleagues and said the same things, they would not call me outspoken. They would say I was uninformed, well-informed, dumb—or whatever was appropriate. It would be *contextual*. But out there, the expectation is that a woman has to be adoring, silent, smiling. She is *not* to be measured according to who she is and what she does and what she knows.” The political world has such a narrow conception of what's acceptable from the wives, she purrs.

Controversial image notwithstanding, Teresa has been a rigorous campaigner on her husband's behalf, crisscrossing the country for speeches, fundraisers, and rallies. It's a big concession from a woman accustomed to a level of privacy and privilege incompatible with campaign life—and one who has long opposed her husband's running for President. “The main reason Kerry did not run last time was that she was



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David, George Chairman and CEO

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To: David, George CORP
Subject: Employee Scholar Program

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opposed to it," a Democrat close to the campaign told me. "She came around to it this time, and to her everlasting credit, once he got in she became an enthusiastic partner."

Though often compared to Hillary Clinton, Teresa Heinz Kerry has no political aspirations of her own and little interest in the details of her husband's race. "She's not involved in the nitty-gritty of the campaign," a former campaign staffer says. "My experience is more that she has really strong opinions on policy." This latter fact, of course, thrills Republicans, who portray Teresa as another aspiring co-President. Undeterred, she continues to share her policy views, along with her total disdain for the Bush Administration's handling of everything from global warming to stem-cell research. ("Sinful," "un-American," and "ignorant" are some of the more colorful labels she has applied to the actions of the Administration.)

Teresa's efforts to play the political spouse are reminiscent of watching your mom try to relate to the kids at your fifth-grade slumber party: sweet, but painfully unconvincing.

On the campaign trail Teresa is generally well received by her admittedly partisan audiences. (Her frequent call for women's voices to be heard "at last and in full" is a particular favorite with the gals.) Her friends claim that the very things that make her so controversial among Beltway types—her openness, her sauciness, her international perspective—work to her advantage in talking to ordinary Americans. "She knows how to swish her hips and just take off to the music," Diana Walker, a photojournalist and a close friend of Teresa's for more than three decades, told me. Teresa's friends do acknowledge that many voters initially assume they can't relate to someone so privileged. But Allyn Stewart, a movie producer and a close friend who (like Walker) often keeps Teresa company on the campaign trail, told

me that once you see how comfortable she is with people from all walks of life, "you realize what a genuine, down-to-earth person she is."

Maybe. But there remains a distinct air of otherness about Teresa—one that is especially noticeable when she's sharing the stage with the girl-next-doorish Elizabeth Edwards. Part of it is that Teresa's style is a bit too glamorous: the movie-star sunglasses, the Chanel shoes, the habit of draping her suit jacket over her shoulders like a cape. Part of it is what Walker calls her "Latin charm," which encompasses not just the accented and strangely phrased English but also a cosmopolitan world-weariness that seems not quite American. "She is so proud of her worldliness that she's made sure not to assimilate too much," a campaign intimate says. And part of it is Teresa's refusal (or inability) to observe the generally accepted standards and practices of campaign

life. If her husband is delivering a speech Teresa has heard a thousand times, she does not pretend to be fascinated. If she grows tired during an event, she will lounge languidly against a nearby barricade, chin in hand. If the glare of TV lights hurts her

eyes at a late-night event, she will don dark glasses. This is not to say that she makes no effort at public events. She claps. She waves. She blows kisses to the crowd and bebops to corny campaign tunes (even though she must by now want to kill herself every time she hears "Johnny Be Good"). But her efforts to play the committed political spouse are often reminiscent of watching your mom try to relate to the kids at your fifth-grade slumber party: sweet, but painfully unconvincing.

Even if Teresa were a model of wifely decorum, she would be an exotic bird in this campaign, by virtue of a personal history that's utterly foreign to most Americans. Born in 1938 to Portuguese parents living in the colony of Mozambique, Maria Teresa Thierstein

Simoës-Ferreira spent her childhood climbing guava trees, swimming in crocodile-infested rivers, and accompanying her father, a successful oncologist, on visits to impoverished villages in the bush. She remembers these days as idyllic. "Think of life as a young person where cynicism is nonexistent," she tells me. "There is order and storytelling and imagination and trees for climbing, and freedom of that kind that you're surrounded by." It was a childhood filled with joy and music and love, she recalls. "And so my yardstick is pretty wholesome. My measure about what is good and important in life for all human beings is pretty simple."

But Teresa also glimpsed a grimmer side of Africa. The Mozambique of her childhood was a colonial dictatorship, and the Simoës-Ferreira family was ultimately forced to flee the country during the Marxist revolution of the mid-1970s. As a college student in Johannesburg in the late 1950s, Teresa witnessed—and marched to protest—apartheid. The political strife she saw left its mark, she says. "It taught me to take a stand."

A few years later, while studying at the University of Geneva to be an interpreter, Teresa met a young American named H. John Heinz III, of the ketchup empire, who in a classic bit of understatement told her that his family made soup for a living. The couple married in 1966, and the twenty-eight-year-old Teresa settled into a new life on the Heinz estate near Pittsburgh. She and Jack had three sons in six years, followed by three failed pregnancies. A moderate Republican, Heinz was elected to Congress in 1971 and to the Senate in 1976, but Teresa had little interest in politics and largely eschewed the campaign trail, especially when the boys were young. For twenty-five years she devoted herself to being a wife and mother.

In 1991 Teresa's domestic cocoon was shattered by a mid-air collision between a helicopter and the small plane carrying her husband around Pennsylvania on Senate business. Teresa went into a deep depression. In the wake of Jack's death she was urged by Republicans to run for his vacant Senate

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THE LIST

SEARCH TERMS THAT SELL

The recent hype over Google's IPO suggests that discussion of dot-com riches is once again in vogue. One hot sector is Internet search engines; unlike so many dot-coms of yore, they actually make money. Search engines are a good way to reach consumers: if you're searching for, say, "iPod," chances are you're in the market to buy one. So advertisers on Yahoo, for example, pay top dollar to Overture, a Yahoo subsidiary, when users click on ads that are displayed next to certain search results.

Prices are determined by advertiser bidding, and studying them reveals a profile of the most sought-after consumer: one who is either rich or grievously injured, not especially bright, and principally concerned with sex, litigation, and profit. Several rules present themselves. Almost any search term is more expensive if it includes "lawyer." Specific searches usually carry higher prices than generic ones. Thus "mesothelioma" (the lung cancer caused by asbestos) commands \$100, whereas "asbestos" costs much less. And things are more expensive when they're "free": "free porn" goes for more than plain old "porn."

Here are some of the more notable search terms and their current prices. —NATHAN LITTLEFIELD

LAW

Personal injury lawyer: \$100.00
Ephedra lawsuit: \$10.00
Disability lawyer: \$7.00
Malpractice: \$4.00
Pro bono: \$0.20

MONEY

Currency trading: \$10.95
Get out of debt: \$10.87
Buy timeshare: \$5.30
Stocks: \$4.00
Free investment advice: \$2.51
Investment advice: \$1.50
Equities: \$0.95

VICE

Penis pump: \$10.00
Viagra: \$2.97
Duty free cigarettes: \$1.15
Female Viagra: \$1.02
Horny goat weed: \$0.79

Poker: \$0.46
Cognac: \$0.21
Roulette: \$0.17
Free porn: \$0.11
Porn: \$0.05

MISCELLANY

Ink jet cartridge: \$2.70
Cigar: \$1.42
T-shirt: \$1.16
Necktie: \$0.69
DVD: \$0.38

seat. She declined. "Teresa made a firm decision that home was where she was needed," Diana Walker told me. But as the heir to the Heinz fortune (Jack had been an only child), Teresa found herself one of the country's richest women (her worth today is estimated to be at least \$500 million), with responsibility for a large charitable organization that was in considerable disarray. When a handful of charred notes on how to revitalize the foundation were found amid the wreckage of her husband's plane, Teresa decided to carry out Jack's plans herself. (First step: diversify holdings and restructure management.) Today she oversees the \$1.3 billion Heinz Endowments, along with the \$70 million Heinz Family Philanthropies that she founded following Jack's death. Each year the organizations distribute \$60 million to programs aimed at (among other things) improving early-childhood education, expanding drug coverage for seniors, and helping cities pursue environmentally friendly development. The money often comes not only with strings attached (for instance, foundation approval for any signs placed in Pittsburgh's riverfront park) but also with tough accountability demands (in 2002 the endowments cut off grants to Pittsburgh public schools until oversight was improved). Even conservatives who grouse about the liberal advocacy work that the Heinz foundations fund don't often question Teresa's business acumen.

Teresa Heinz and John Kerry were introduced by her first husband at an Earth Day event on the Washington Mall in 1990. The two met again after Jack Heinz's death, at a 1992 environmental summit in Rio de Janeiro. As the story goes, the two fell into a long talk over dinner, much of it conducted in French. Theirs was not the starry-eyed romance of the young. (As Teresa told *Elle* magazine, "There was no loopety-loop.") And when courtship turned to matrimony, the couple had to contend with blending their two families (her three sons, his two daughters) as well as their firmly established lifestyles and careers. Teresa was already well aware of the downside to being a politician's wife. But John had to learn

just how nasty people can be about men who marry very rich women—especially men in the expensive field of politics. (One popular joke goes, "Every time Kerry climbs into bed, he's fundraising.") Of people who question Kerry's motives for marrying her, Teresa says simply, "They're stupid."

Republicans gleefully deride Teresa's now infamous quirkiness as the arch, imperious manner of a super-rich cultural elitist. The underlying political message: A presidential candidate married to this woman cannot possibly relate to ordinary Americans. Contributing to this slant is Teresa's unfortunate tendency to say and do things highlighting the fact that neither she nor her husband hails from anywhere near Middle America—for instance, she opened her convention speech in five languages, and she has compared Kerry to a fine wine: "You know, it takes time to mature, and then it gets really good and you can sip it."

But even though she's taken some hard hits, Teresa is not overly concerned with toning down her style or avoiding controversy. (During remarks she made at a Milwaukee campaign stop, a group of pro-Bush hecklers began chanting, "Four more years!" She promptly fired back, "They want four more years of hell!") "Teresa is very proud of being headstrong and candid—and powerful," a friend of Kerry's told me. (The same goes for her cherished "Europeanness," he added.) Indeed, Teresa's friends are outraged at the idea that she would even consider trimming her sails to fit a more traditional image of a candidate's wife. "Teresa Heinz Kerry is honest and she is straightforward and she is not afraid to be herself," Diana Walker says, her voice rising. "Why is that criticized? It should be enjoyed. It should be considered a breath of fresh air in politics today." Teresa herself is more philosophical. "People will write and [say] whatever about me for different motives—or for no motive at all," she says in that soft, drowsy voice. "I can't control that. I can only control what I say and what I do." ▀

Michelle Cottle is a senior editor at The New Republic.



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Suspended Sentencing

The consequences of "the single most irresponsible decision in the modern history of the Supreme Court"

BY BENJAMIN WITTES

When Dwight W. Watson first came before U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson for sentencing, on June 23, the judge gave him six years in prison. Watson was the North Carolina tobacco farmer who paralyzed a section of Washington, D.C., for two days last year by driving a tractor into a pond on the National Mall and threatening to detonate an "organophosphate bomb." The federal sentencing rules suggested a maximum of sixteen months for Watson's crimes of making threats and damaging federal parkland. But in a time of heightened terrorism fears Judge Jackson felt that the incident's impact on the city—Washington, he said, had regarded Watson "as a one-man weapon of mass destruction"—justified a longer detention.

One day after Watson's sentencing, however, the Supreme Court handed down its blockbuster decision in *Blakely v. Washington*, and Judge Jackson had to backtrack. In *Blakely*, a kidnapping case originating in the state of Washington, the Court ruled that judges cannot use facts other than those brought before a jury to increase a convict's sentence beyond the standard set by state guidelines. So at a hearing a few days later Jackson cut Watson's time to the fifteen-plus months he had already served. "The Supreme Court has told me that what I did a week ago was plainly illegal," he told the defendant in court. "By my count, Mr. Watson, you're a free man in a few hours."

This was just the beginning. Within days of the *Blakely* decision the system of criminal sentencing in the United States was in turmoil. A few examples: A drug dealer in West Virginia saw nineteen of twenty years dropped from a sentence for conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine. In Tennessee a man convicted of raping an eighty-two-year-old woman got the minimum sen-

tence of twenty-five years in prison. In Oklahoma a judge actually gave a bank robber three sentences for the same crime, saying he was unsure what was lawful under *Blakely*. By the time you read this, countless convicts will have had their cases affected by the ruling.

But *Blakely* did more than guarantee leniency for criminals in as many as 270,000 federal cases alone. It left state and federal legislatures wondering what the fundamental rules

federal courts of appeals quickly ruled that the decision effectively invalidated them. Others ruled that *Blakely* did not apply to the federal guidelines. And the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, in a remarkable opinion, declared unanimously that its judges did not know what the decision meant and urged the Supreme Court to resolve the issue immediately to avert "what we see as an impending crisis in the administration of criminal justice in the federal courts." Both the Bush Administration, in court filings, and the Senate, in a nonbinding resolution, also urged the Court to take up the matter swiftly. And on August 2 the Court did so, agreeing to hear arguments on the day its new term begins in October. By the time you read this, the landscape may have changed dramatically.



of sentencing were and which laws they would have to rewrite. Numerous states saw their sentencing rules imperiled, and the federal sentencing guidelines—the most ambitious effort to reform federal criminal sentencing in American history—were cast into grave constitutional doubt. The Justice Department was left unsure how to draft indictments so that people convicted of serious crimes would receive serious punishments.

Nor was clarity forthcoming, because in the aftermath of the *Blakely* decision the lower federal courts immediately split as to whether the federal guidelines must be scrapped. Some

In the incoherence of its principle, the awesome scope of its impact, and its sheer contempt for so many different institutions in American life, *Blakely* stands out as the single most irresponsible decision in the modern history of the Supreme Court. The case may never become an iconic example of judicial excess for either liberals or conservatives—either a *Roe v. Wade* or a *Bush v. Gore*. It doesn't involve a hot-button social issue, and it confounds the Court's normal ideological divide: Justice Antonin Scalia wrote the majority opinion for himself, his fellow conservative Clarence Thomas, and the liberal justices John Paul Stevens,

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David Souter, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Dissenting were Chief Justice William Rehnquist, a conservative; the centrists Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy; and the more liberal Stephen Breyer. Neither major political movement can attack the majority without attacking some of the justices its partisans profess to admire most.

But as an example of judicial usurpation, *Blakely* has no modern parallel. It has deprived political institutions of their rightful authority on the basis of legal theories ill grounded in the Constitution—and has done so in a fashion profoundly disruptive to the democratic choices of the people's elected representatives and to the functioning of the courts. *Roe*, whether you love it or hate it, affected only abortion policy. *Blakely*, in contrast, razes the entire structure of something as basic to the justice system as criminal sentencing.

The Court's decision purports to limit judicial discretion; Scalia's opin-

Reform Act of 1984, which sought to make sentencing more predictable. Under the sentencing guidelines that resulted, judges were compelled to plug a variety of factors into a complex formula that would provide a sentencing range. The guidelines are far from perfect: they sometimes produce gross injustices, most often because of mandatory minimums in drug cases, and many judges have chafed at being forced to impose such terms. Indeed, *Blakely* is best understood as part of a judicial backlash against the constraints of determinate sentencing, as the guideline-based system is called. But what a childish backlash it has been.

The counterrevolution began in 2000, with a case called *Apprendi v. New Jersey*. *Apprendi* involved a state hate-crimes law that allowed judges to impose sentences beyond the usual maximum if racial animus lay behind the crime. In this case a man who had fired a gun into a black family's house was sen-

tenced to twelve years in prison—two years more than the maximum for firearm possession. The Court, however, struck down the sentence, because the defendant's racial motivation had not been proved to the jury; rather, it had been

found by a judge. "Other than the fact of a prior conviction," the Court held, "any fact that increases the penalty for a crime beyond the prescribed statutory maximum must be submitted to a jury, and proved beyond a reasonable doubt."

The theory behind *Apprendi* seems both simple and attractive: a *fact* that pushes a sentence above the statutory maximum for the offense is really an *element* of a more serious crime, and every element of a crime has traditionally had to be proved to a jury. But judges have always considered facts in sentencing that were not proved to the jury. So *Apprendi* forced the question of which sentencing factors must count as elements and which judges could still consider on their own. In *Blakely* the Court answered that question: anything that increases a sentence beyond the "standard range" set by law is by

definition an element, so a judge may not consider it in sentencing unless it has been proved to the jury.

Ralph H. Blakely Jr. was not actually given a sentence beyond the ten-year maximum for second-degree kidnapping under a Washington State statute. In fact, he received only seven years and six months. Even this sentence, however, exceeded the standard range of the state's sentencing guidelines, a range the trial judge was permitted to exceed only if he found unusual circumstances—which in this case he did. But those circumstances had not been presented to the jury. In the opinion of Scalia and the majority, this meant that they could not be the basis for the greater sentence.

The problems with this approach are profound; indeed, its consequences are absurd. What *would* be allowed under *Blakely*? To name one possibility, a state legislature could define all felonies as punishable by anything from probation to life in prison, giving judges unlimited flexibility. Such a system, of course, is precisely what Congress was reacting against when it passed the sentencing-reform law. Nor, under *Blakely*, would it present a constitutional problem to have sentencing dictated entirely by law; all robbers, for example, could get twenty years without regard to circumstances. But as the consequences of mandatory minimums have shown, no legislature ought to be painting with such broad strokes.

According to the logic of *Blakely*, however, a legislature *cannot* create a system for increasing sentences according to a range of factors and actually require judges to employ that system. A guideline system would work constitutionally only so long as it was not mandatory, or—more ridiculous—so long as judges started with a maximum sentence and departed *downward*. After all, *Apprendi* and *Blakely* are concerned only with facts that increase a sentence, effectively becoming elements of a more serious crime—not with facts that may cause a judge to punish more leniently. So the federal sentencing guidelines might be salvageable by making all felonies punishable by, say, the maximum

Within days of the *Blakely* decision the U.S. system of criminal sentencing was in turmoil—because no one is sure what the decision means.

ion claims it will "give intelligible content to the right of jury trial" by "ensuring that the judge's authority to sentence derives wholly from the jury's verdict." In reality, however, the decision will more likely expand, not limit, the power of judges—specifically by preventing legislatures from meaningfully guiding their choices in handing down sentences.

For most of the nation's history sentencing was a matter for judges alone. Congress set the range of punishments a crime could carry, and judges decided how, within that range, to impose those punishments. The result was huge racial, regional, and other disparities in sentences for comparable offenses—disparities that often reflected the oddities of individual jurists. Congress responded with the Sentencing

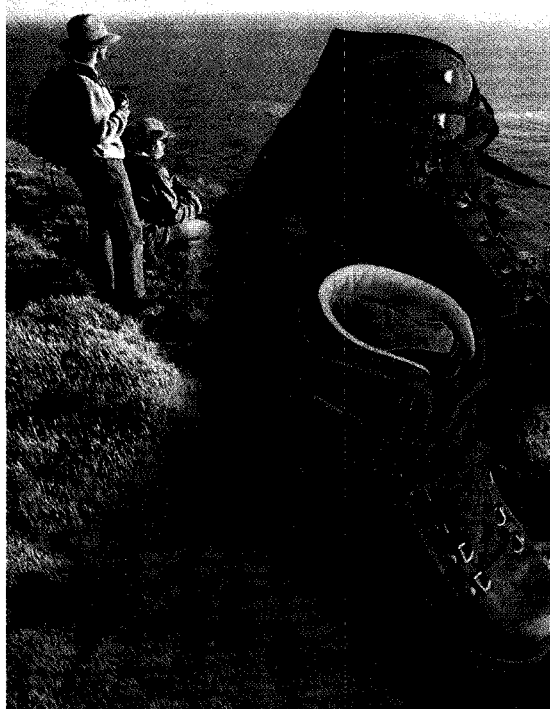
sentence the crime can carry, and then creating an elaborate system whereby judges would weigh various factors to reduce those sentences. Short of that, the only way to preserve guided sentencing would be to prove all sentencing factors to a jury, either at trial or in a separate hearing after a defendant's conviction—either way, a dramatic departure from traditional practice.

In short, it's almost inevitable that the decision will either make sentencing guidelines unacceptably rigid or loosen them to the point of meaninglessness, enabling judges to act according to their own whims. Right now, the defense bar loves this decision, because it lessens the sentences many current defendants will face. In the long run, however, the system the decision will create could end up being far less fair to defendants. Material now kept away from the jury as potentially inflammatory might have to be included in indictments and proved at trial—thereby exposing defendants to less impartial trials.

Then again, who knows? What makes this decision so deeply reckless is that nobody can say for sure what it means. Disruption is not always a bad thing. Some of the Court's finest hours, in fact, have caused widespread upset in political and legal institutions; think of the school-desegregation decisions. But consider also the differences between *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Blakely*. *Brown* stated a clear, morally compelling principle ("Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal") that gave voice to fundamental constitutional language ("No State shall ... deny ... the equal protection of the laws") and, in short order, gave crystal-clear guidance to any school district that cared to follow the law (desegregate schools with "all deliberate speed"). *Blakely*, in contrast, disrupts years of settled practice without protecting any coherent value—except the value, apparently so important to both right and left on the Court, of giving the justices the final say on everything. ▀

Benjamin Wittes is an editorial writer specializing in legal affairs for The Washington Post and the author of Starr: A Reassessment (2002).

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"To Hell With Lipitor!"

Medicare reform—an explanation

BY P. J. O'ROURKE

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 will—let's say—improve and modernize Medicare, mostly by giving old people money for drugs, at an expenditure of whatever, to be funded somehow. In his State of the Union address the President said the ten-year cost would be \$400 billion. Medicare's chief actuary, Richard Foster, had informed the Administration that the cost would be more than \$500 billion. He was told he'd lose his job if he let Congress know. Senator Trent Lott now estimates "closer to \$600 or \$800 billion." Good health is priceless. So are old people's votes.

Three quarters of seniors already had some prescription-drug coverage that cost Medicare nothing. The act "improves and modernizes" this, giving subsidies of \$70 billion to employers and retirement plans that provide drug benefits.

Starting in 2006, Medicare recipients can enroll in government-approved private prescription-insurance plans (also subsidized) for about \$35 a month. After a \$250 deductible, 75 percent of drug costs will be covered up to \$2,250; then no costs will be covered up to \$5,100; then all costs will be covered except for five percent that won't be. Until 2006 government-approved private prescription-discount cards will furnish 15 to 25 percent savings (just in time, with wholesale prices for brand-name prescription drugs having risen 27.6 percent since 1999). Low-income beneficiaries will get \$600 a year credited to these cards, which are free unless they use them. (There's a co-pay of five to 10 percent.)

Insert the phrases "a bewildering array of" and "until costs skyrocket" into each of the preceding sentences for a better understanding of new Medicare drug benefits.

These benefits were exhaustively

explained in May, at a senior center in Nashua, New Hampshire, by Congressman Charles Bass, by an AARP representative, by the House Energy and Commerce Committee's chief health counsel, and by the New England regional director of the Department of Health and Human Services. The audience's questions were acute: Preferred-drug lists and plan formularies? Benefit carry-overs? Calculation of income for assistance threshold? Multiple entitlement eligibilities?

Anyone who has experienced a Greatest Generation soliloquy on macaroni coupon rebates knows that this age cohort can shop. The HHS regional director, Brian Cresta, gave the audience his phone number: "Call me personally if you still don't understand the discount cards."

"I've given my number in dozens of meetings," Cresta said later. "I haven't gotten a call yet."

The old people weren't confused. And they weren't grateful. Tell kids they deserve a treat. Then give them 15 percent of a Snickers, or a little more if it's some generic candy bar. Tell them how, in two years, they can have candy free—if they pay for part of it and a bite has been taken out of the middle.

There must be a better way to give old people money for drugs—such as giving old people money for drugs. For Medicare recipients, average out-of-pocket spending on prescriptions in 2003 was \$999. Pay them each \$600 a year and the Prescription Drug Act's cost is slashed to \$242.2 billion.

"How come," a man in the Nashua audience asked, "Canada can have the same drugs and pay less? [applause] Why don't they get some brain power down in Washington and lobby these drug companies down in price? [applause]"

The act in fact bans reimportation from Canada—devil take NAFTA prin-

ciples—and forbids Medicare to bargain with pharmaceutical companies, although the Department of Veterans Affairs successfully does so.

But we might not want to cut drug prices too much. America is the last important free market for pharmaceuticals. Perhaps coincidentally, America produces two thirds of all "innovative drugs." Twenty years ago a more laissez-faire Europe produced two thirds of all innovative drugs, perhaps coincidentally. Anyway, drugs account for only 10.5 percent of health-care costs.

Which still leaves us wondering where to get that \$242.2 billion or \$400 or \$500 or \$600 or \$800 billion, not to mention the \$27.7 trillion in unfunded liability that Medicare's trustees say Medicare faces over the next seventy-five years. (Picture nonagenarian ravers demanding coverage for Ecstasy prescriptions.) Americans are now spending \$1.55 trillion a year on health care. There's no way to cut these costs, because there's no way Dad's going to Dr. Bob's Cut-Rate Osteopath Shop.

We could raise taxes. (A lot. Medicare will consume half of all federal income-tax revenue by 2039 if current trends continue.) We could meanstest fairly—by including the incomes of the people who owe everything to Medicare recipients: their kids. (That's me. Scratch that.) Or we could privatize Medicare. U.S. median household income is around \$40,000. The federal Medicare tax is 2.9 percent. Invest that \$1,160 a year, from age twenty-five to age sixty-five, at a six percent return, and you'd have \$215,589. But that's in forty years.

Until then we have a choice: a realism about what Medicare can do, or a reality in which it can't do much. Perhaps the latter option isn't unthinkable.

At the Nashua senior center a Mr. Kim, who looked well into his seventies, addressed the audience. After apologizing for his English, he said, "To hell with Lipitor, a hundred and fifty dollars a month! I decided to hell with it. If I die, I die. I exercised. I lowered cholesterol level. Ran half marathon!" ▀

P. J. O'Rourke is a correspondent for The Atlantic. His most recent book is Peace Kills (2004).



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Tick, Tick, Tick

Pakistan is a nuclear time bomb—perhaps the greatest threat to American security today. Here's how to defuse it

BY GRAHAM ALLISON

Not since the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 have I been as frightened by a single news story as I was by the revelation late last year that Abdul Qadeer Khan, the founder of Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program, had been selling nuclear technology and services on the black market. The story began to break last summer, after U.S. and British intelligence operatives intercepted a shipment of parts for centrifuges (which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear bombs as well as fuel) on its way from Dubai to Libya. The centrifuges turned out to have been designed by Khan, and before long investigators had uncovered what the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has called a "Wal-Mart of private-sector proliferation"—a decades-old illicit market in nuclear materials, designs, technologies, and consulting services, all run out of Pakistan.

The Pakistani government's response to the scandal was not reassuring. Khan made a four-minute televised speech on February 4 asserting that "there was never any kind of authorization for these activities by the government." He took full responsibility for his actions and asked for a pardon, which was immediately granted by President Pervez Musharraf, who essentially buried the affair. Today Pakistan's official position remains that no member of Musharraf's government had any concrete knowledge of the illicit transfer—an assertion that U.S. intelligence officials in Pakistan and elsewhere dismiss as absurd. Meanwhile, Pakistani investigators have reportedly questioned a grand total of eleven people from among the country's 6,000 nuclear scientists and 45,000 nuclear workers, and have refused to allow either the United States or the IAEA access to Khan for questioning.

Pakistan's nuclear complex poses two main threats. The first—highlighted by Khan's black-market network—is that nuclear weapons, know-how, or materials will find their way into the hands of terrorists. For instance, we have learned that in August of 2001, even as the final planning for 9/11 was under way, Osama bin Laden received two former officials of Pakistan's atomic-energy program—Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majid—at a secret compound near Kabul. Over the course of three days of intense conversation bin Laden and his second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, grilled Mahmood and Majid



about how to make weapons of mass destruction. After Mahmood and Majid were arrested, on October 23, 2001, Mahmood told Pakistani interrogation teams, working in concert with the CIA, that Osama bin Laden had expressed a keen interest in nuclear weapons and had sought the scientists' help in recruiting other Pakistani nuclear experts who could provide expertise in the mechanics of bomb-making. CIA Director George Tenet found the report of Mahmood and Majid's meeting with bin Laden so disturbing that he flew directly to Islamabad to confront President Musharraf.

This was not the first time that Pakistani agents had rendered nuclear assistance to dangerous actors: in 1997 Pakistani nuclear scientists made secret trips to North Korea, providing technical support for that country's nuclear-weapons program in exchange for Pyongyang's help in developing long-range missiles. And not long ago, according to American intelligence, another Pakistani nuclear scientist negotiated with Libyan agents over the price of nuclear-bomb designs. Pakistan's nuclear program has long been a leaky vessel; the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has deemed the country "the world's No. 1 nuclear proliferator."

Clearly, there is a significant danger that the black market will put Pakistani nukes (or nuclear material and technical knowledge) in terrorist hands—if it hasn't already. But there is a second, equally significant danger: that a coup might topple Musharraf and leave all or some of Pakistan's nuclear weapons under the control of al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or some other militant Islamic group (or, indeed, under the control of more than one). Part of the problem is that in order to keep its focal enemy, India, from destroying its arsenal in a pre-emptive strike, Pakistan has hidden its nuclear weapons throughout the country; some of them may be in regions that are effectively under fundamentalist Muslim control. Moreover, Pakistan's official alliance with the United States in the war on terror has only increased the danger posed by al-Qaeda sympathizers within its nuclear establishment. Although Musharraf has pledged his "unstinting cooperation in the fight against terrorism," not all the thousands of officers in Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies have signed on. After all, until 9/11 some of them were working closely with members of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Nor, for that matter, does Pakistan's general population support Musharraf's alliance with the United States. A poll this past March asked Pakistani citizens which leaders in international affairs they viewed favorably. Only seven per-

cent said George W. Bush—and 65 percent said Osama bin Laden.

The uneasy contradiction between Musharraf's pro-American foreign policy and the widespread anti-Americanism within Pakistan has forced Pakistani policymakers to walk a razor's edge. Musharraf faces the clear and present threat of assassination: twice in the past year he has narrowly escaped attempts on his life. When I spoke to him not long after the second of those attempts, he said he thought he had used up many of his nine lives.

It may not take a bullet to wrest control over Pakistan's nuclear arsenal from Musharraf. In local elections held in October of 2002 a coalition of fundamentalist parties won command of the government in the North West Frontier Province. The group, known as Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), offered a simple platform: pro-Taliban, anti-American, and against all Pakistani involvement in the war on terror. MMA is now the third largest party in Pakistan's parliament; from its new position of strength it has spoken vigorously about the need to regain the honor Pakistan has lost through its subservience to the United States and its struggle with India, with which it has been engaged in a harrowing game of nuclear brinkmanship. To win a vote of confidence that would allow him to serve out his presidential term (which ends in 2007), Musharraf was recently compelled to make a deal with the Islamist parties to step down as head of the military by the end of this year. If all that weren't disconcerting enough, the region the MMA controls happens to be the very one where Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri are currently believed to be hiding.

Under these conditions the emergence of a nuclear-equipped splinter group from within the Pakistani establishment looks disturbingly plausible. Provoked by anger that Musharraf has made Pakistan a puppet of the United States, such a group would have not only a motive and the domestic political support for a nuclear terrorist act against America but also the organizational competence, the expertise, and the raw material to carry it out.

THE ODDS

ARNOLDUS PONTIFEX?

Although Pope Gregory XIV banned betting on papal elections in 1591, the practice continues: Paddy Power, an Irish bookmaker (www.paddypower.com), is risking the ire of the Catholic Church by offering wagers on the next Pope. Who are some of the best bets? Many gamblers and Vatican watchers are predicting a Third World Pope. One factor to take into account before placing your bet is age. The College of Cardinals will probably be looking for a Pope who is neither too old (John Paul I's death after a month in office still rankles) nor too young (many feel that John Paul II's twenty-six-year pontificate has been too long). Paddy Power has not limited its betting options to real people; two of the longest shots (at 5,000 to 1) are fictional churchmen: Father Dougal McGuire, the dim-witted priest on the discontinued British comedy *Father Ted*, and Reverend Lovejoy, from *The Simpsons*. Below is some of the recent action on the flesh-and-blood candidates. The odds are those being given by Paddy Power. —ELIZABETH SHELBURNE

Dionigi Tettamanzi (Italy): 2 to 1. If an Italian is to occupy the papal throne again, the odds are on this "wee fat guy," as Tettamanzi was once called by a Scottish cardinal.

Cláudio Hummes (Brazil): 5 to 2. A progressive in his youth who has become a traditionalist (albeit with a soft spot for the landless) in his old age, Hummes might appeal to those who would like a more moderate Third World Pope.

Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino (Cuba): 11 to 2. Like John Paul II, Ortega y Alamino comes from a Communist country; he has argued against rampant capitalism.

Francis Arinze (Nigeria): 6 to 1. A convert from animism to Catholicism at the age of nine, the conservative Arinze is on everyone's short list.

Giovanni Battista Re (Italy): 8 to 1. A creature of the Curia (the Vatican bureaucracy), Re is considered a moderate.

Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga (Honduras): 10 to 1. This fierce advocate for Third World debt relief might—at age sixty-one—be deemed too young.

Giacomo Biffi (Italy): 10 to 1. An extremely conservative cardinal, Biffi



gets better odds from Paddy Power than most Vatican watchers would give him.

Ennio Antonelli (Italy): 12 to 1. These odds, too, are surprisingly good; Antonelli barely registers on the *Vaticanista* radar. Then again, neither did Karol Wojtyła, better known as John Paul II.

Angelo Scola (Italy): 12 to 1. Three Popes since 1900 have come from Venice; Scola could be the fourth.

Christoph Schönborn (Austria): 12 to 1. Touted as *papabile* outside Austria, Schönborn is not as well respected inside it.

Crescenzo Sepe (Italy): 14 to 1. Sepe, who is sixty-one, is a young (again, probably too young) rising star inside the Vatican, known for his success in leading the year-long Jubilee celebration in 2000.

Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne (Peru): 14 to 1. The first cardinal from Opus Dei (the group infamously portrayed in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*), Cipriani took the Peruvian basketball team to a Latin American championship when he was young.

Carlo Maria Martini (Italy): 16 to 1. Many think this very liberal Jesuit's time has passed.

Godfried Danneels (Belgium): 20 to 1. A reformer who has considered appointing women to curial agencies, Danneels would be likely to allow local churches more power.

Joseph Ratzinger (Germany): 25 to 1. A longtime member of the Curia, and probably a stronger candidate than the odds here would suggest, Ratzinger has been a stern traditionalist in his role as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Arnold Schwarzenegger (USA): 1,500 to 1, according to the Paddy Power Web site. (Well, he is Catholic.)

What to do about this combustible mixture of extreme political instability and nuclear capability is perhaps the most difficult challenge facing U.S. policymakers today. (Consider, for instance, how much simpler it is to deal with North Korea's nuclear program, which is controlled by a monolithic regime and not by layers of governmental subagencies that may have conflicting loyalties and ideologies.) Up to now the Bush Administration's response to this challenge has consisted of essentially three ingredients: trying to keep the Pakistani government on America's side in the war on terror (and the Administration deserves credit for carefully nurturing its relationship with Musharraf); examining the possibility of having American forces seize or neutralize Pakistan's nuclear arsenal in an emergency; and blindly hoping that the worst does not occur. But hope, as the well-known saying at the Pentagon goes, is not a plan.

Recent history offers something of a model for how to proceed. In August of 1991 a group of conservatives in the Soviet security establishment attempted to overthrow President Mikhail Gorbachev. Tanks commanded by the coup plotters ringed the Kremlin; Gorbachev, on vacation in the southern part of the country, was placed under house arrest. In the weeks that followed, President George H.W. Bush announced that the United States would unilaterally remove all battlefield nuclear weapons and challenged the Soviet Union to do likewise. The coup was aborted, and Gorbachev responded to Bush's initiative by launching a process that eventually withdrew thousands of Soviet tactical nuclear weapons from the outer reaches of the empire, helping to ensure that the looming dissolution of the Soviet Union would not create more than a dozen new nuclear states. When President Bill Clinton took office, he focused on eliminating the strategic nuclear arsenals that remained in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. By the end of 1996 every one of the nuclear weapons in those states had been deactivated and returned to Russia. Pakistan's situation today is not identical to Russia's in the early 1990s, though the problem of

diffused control of nuclear weapons is analogous. But the same lesson applies: it's that alertness in this arena can yield positive results.

Most of what has to be done to secure Pakistan's nuclear weapons and materials will have to be done by the Pakistanis themselves—with American encouragement. One of the more enduring legacies of the Musharraf administration may be the Nuclear Command Authority, completed in December of 2003. Designed to impose greater centralized control over the Khan Research Laboratories and the Pakistani Atomic Energy Commission, the NCA is headed by Musharraf and vice-chaired by Pakistan's Prime Minister, and is divided into two units—for nuclear weapons and for nuclear scientific personnel—each led by a three-star general.

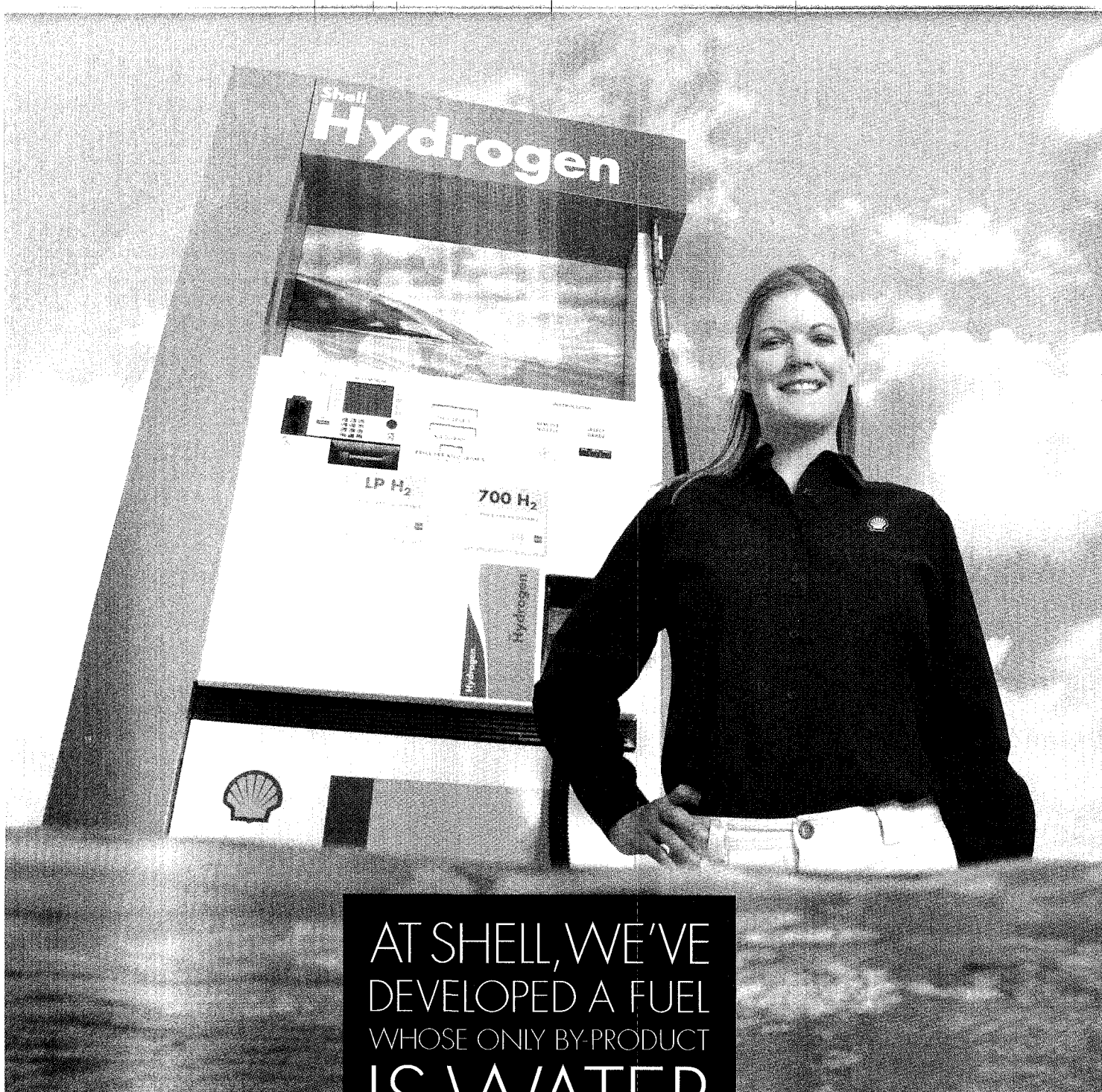
One option would be for the United States to supply Pakistan with a technology called "permissive action links," which would require Musharraf himself to enter an electronic code before any of the country's nuclear weapons could be deployed. Judging from my conversations with Musharraf last winter, however, the delicacy and sensitivity—and, given the constraints of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the legal difficulty—of such a project can hardly be exaggerated. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is designed first and foremost to deter India. As noted, Pakistan fears that India might locate its nuclear arsenal and destroy its nuclear weapons in a first strike. (Every nuclear power has had similar fears in the early stages of its program.) No reasonable country would divulge information that would leave its arsenal vulnerable to a pre-emptive strike. And even though Pakistan is now an ally of the United States in the war against al-Qaeda, can Musharraf be confident that if the United States provides him with permissive action links, it will not retain some undisclosed ability to disable Pakistan's weapons? An offer of U.S. technical and financial assistance—along with diplomatic assistance in the dispute over Kashmir—might incline Musharraf to let us help him secure electronic control over his arsenal. But

we must remember that pushing for too much too soon could destabilize Musharraf—or even lead to his overthrow by someone who is more sympathetic to bin Laden than to the United States.

Our unlikely savior here might be, of all countries, China. For many years China has acted as an ally, mentor, and supplier of arms to Pakistan, and the two countries are united by their antagonism toward India. If China were to embrace comprehensive security and control of its own arsenal, and be certified by the United States as having done so, then perhaps Musharraf would permit China and the United States each to review the security procedures for half of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and materials, so that neither country could have full knowledge of *all* of Pakistan's arsenal.

The actions required to neutralize the threat of Pakistani proliferation are ambitious; a measure of realism is necessary. But realism need not mean defeatism. In the early 1960s John F. Kennedy predicted that "by 1970 there may be ten nuclear powers instead of four, and by 1975, fifteen or twenty." If those nations with the technical capacity to build nuclear weapons had gone ahead and done so, Kennedy's prediction would have come true. But his warning helped awaken the world to the dangers of unconstrained proliferation. The United States and other nations negotiated international constraints, provided security guarantees, offered inducements, and threatened punishment. Today 187 nations—including scores that have the technical capacity to build nuclear arsenals—have renounced nuclear weapons and committed themselves to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; only eight states (not the "fifteen or twenty" of Kennedy's prediction) have nuclear weapons. The challenge now is to achieve similar success in blocking the seemingly inexorable path to a nuclear 9/11. ■

Graham Allison, the director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, at Harvard University, served as assistant secretary of defense under President Bill Clinton and special adviser to the Secretary of Defense under President Ronald Reagan. His most recent book is Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe (2004).



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Primary Sources

How gay marriage could reduce the federal deficit; what your eleven-year-old has in common with presidential debaters; Cuba's looming chaos

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Cuba Not-So-Libre

Americans (and Cubans) who have been waiting a long time for Fidel Castro to die assume that Cuba's Communist dictatorship will pass into history along with its founder. This is almost certainly a mistake, according to the RAND analysis "Cuba After Castro," which calls even a democratic-leaning post-Castro government a "remote possibility." Forty-five years of Communist rule—particularly the fifteen lean years since the Soviet collapse—have ravaged Cuba's economy and civil society; any would-be democratizer will have to cope with rising discrimination and racial inequality, disaffected youth, and an atmosphere of pervasive distrust and alienation. Worse, Cuba's population, like Western Europe's, is rapidly aging—and Cuba's lack of resources and infrastructure leaves it far less well equipped to cope with a shrinking labor force and an expanding pensioner class. The study's authors argue that given all these obstacles, and the absence of any anti-Castro organization with a serious claim to political legitimacy, the most likely fate for post-Castro Cuba is some form of military rule, perhaps similar to the Jaruzelski regime in 1980s Poland. Bleak as this prospect sounds, it's better than a scenario in which Cuba becomes a lawless "failed state" like Haiti, forcing

the United States to choose between military intervention and a humanitarian crisis that sends floods of migrants toward American shores.

—"Cuba After Castro: Legacies, Challenges, and Impediments," Edward Gonzalez and Kevin F. McCarthy, RAND Corporation

Waving the Bloody JPEG

The mainstream press has shied away from showing the most graphic images from the Iraq War—the beheading of hostages, the Abu Ghraib atrocities, the murdered American contractors. But the media blackout hasn't kept the increasingly Web-savvy public from viewing them. According to a recent survey, some 30 million people—or 24 percent of all adult Internet users—report having seen images online of graphic violence in Iraq that have been kept out of other media, and 28 percent of those have logged on with the express intention of tracking such images down. Not everyone thinks it's a good idea for these images to be available online: just 29 percent of women approve, for example, compared with 53 percent of men. The gender gap grows among those who have actually sampled such photos: 68 percent of men report being glad to have seen them, and 55 percent of women report wishing they hadn't.

—"The Internet as a Unique News Source," Deborah Fallows and Lee Rainie, Pew Internet & American Life Project

THE ECONOMY

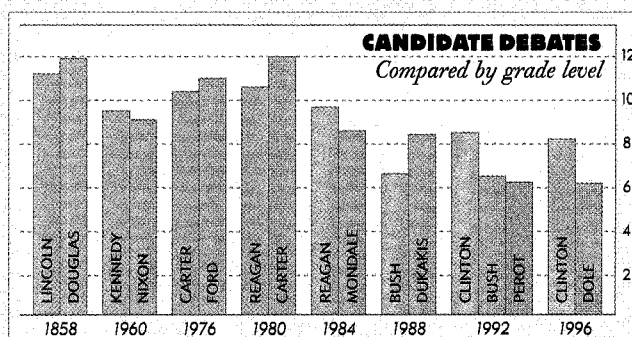
The Varieties of Consumer Experience

Do the forty varieties of coffee for sale in your local Starbucks mean that America's standard of living is significantly higher than we think? That's the case made by a pair of economists from Columbia and New York's Federal Reserve Bank, in a paper that highlights the role globalization plays not only in reducing prices for goods but also in dramatically increasing the variety of goods for sale. In 1972, they note, the United States imported 74,667 varieties of 7,731 goods from around the world; in 2001 it imported 259,215 varieties of 16,390

goods. The significance of this increase lies in the inherent value of variety to consumers, who are willing to pay higher prices not only for higher quality but also for greater choice. The authors estimate that the explosion of variety in imports has created a heretofore unmeasured increase in national economic well-being, equivalent to a 2.8 percent spike in annual GDP—adding the equivalent of roughly \$300 billion in value to the U.S. economy, and to the lives of gourmet-coffee drinkers, anime aficionados, and imported-beer connoisseurs everywhere.

—"Globalization and the Gains From Variety," Christian Broda and David Weinstein, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

THE NATION



The Making of the President—of Sixth Grade

Just how smart are American voters? If the way politicians address the electorate is any measure, about as sharp as a middle school student. Taking into account factors including grammar, word choice, and sentence length, the language Web site yourDictionary.com found that during the 2000 debates George W. Bush and Al Gore spoke, respectively, at a sixth- and a high seventh-grade level. (The Lincoln-Douglas debates were carried out at about a twelfth-grade level.) And the Bush-Gore contest actually marked a slight uptick after almost two decades of decline. As disheartening as this sounds (it's safe to say that most Americans would prefer leaders with post-pubescent rhetorical skills), the voters themselves inspire more confidence. At the third debate in 2000, in a "town meeting" setting where Bush and Gore responded to questions from the audience, the candidates logged their lowest scores of the campaign (low sixth grade for Bush, high seventh grade for Gore). The audience's questions, in contrast, were at the ninth-grade level on average.

—"Presidential Debates Mirror Long-term School Decline," Robert Beard and Paul JJ Payack, yourDictionary.com



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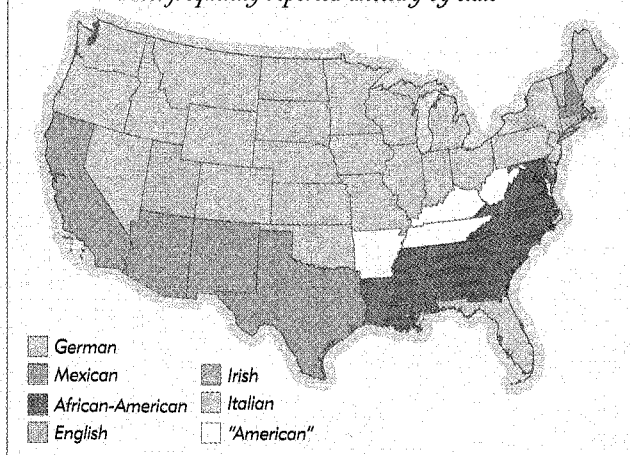
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AMERICAN HERITAGE

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A Nation of (German) Immigrants

They lost two world wars, but they conquered America. According to a recent Census Bureau report, when asked their ancestral ethnicity, 43 million Americans chose German, which beat out the runner-up, Irish, by more than 10 million. (The next most commonly cited ethnicities were African-American and English, with roughly 25 million each, followed in descending order by Mexican, Italian, Polish, French, and American Indian.) Teutonic dominance used to be even greater: from 1990 to 2000 the German-identifying share of the population decreased from 23 percent to 15 percent, and the other major Northern European groups suffered smaller but significant dips. The groups that grew the most in percentage terms were Latin Americans (particularly Mexicans and Puerto Ricans) and Asians (with Chinese, Indians, and Filipinos leading the way), and also those describing themselves more generally as Hispanic, African, European, or white. Good news for those who fear looming ethnic balkanization: the number of people who called their ancestry simply "American" grew by eight million, to roughly 20 million, during the 1990s, in the largest numerical increase for any group.

—“Ancestry: 2000,” U.S. Census Bureau

SOCIETY

Writer, Read Thyself

Reading is in sharp decline in the United States, according to “Reading at Risk,” a doom-laced report from the National Endowment for the Arts. The report draws on census data showing that the percentage of the adult American population reading “literature”—defined somewhat snobbishly as fiction, plays, and poetry—has dropped by seven points in the past decade, and ten points since 1982, to its current low of 47

percent. (The decline is steep among men, only a third of whom now report reading literature regularly, and among young adults, with the group aged eighteen to twenty-four seeing a particularly sharp drop.) The picture seems less dire, however, when one considers that the reading of all books, nonfiction included, dropped by only four points over the past decade—suggesting that readers’ tastes are increasingly turning toward nonfiction. It’s not for

want of would-be novelists and poets: the number of people who claim to do “creative writing” has risen from around 11 million to nearly 15 million since 1982, meaning that a full seven percent of the adult population is currently churning out writing for an ever diminishing pool of readers.

—“Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America,” National Endowment for the Arts

Crimes of the Heart

It’s often said that half of all marriages end in divorce, but there’s an upside, according to a recent paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research: at least they aren’t ending in unnatural death. The study, which looked at the impact of divorce law on family violence since 1969, finds that states permitting unilateral, “no-fault” divorce—whereby either spouse may initiate separation proceedings for any reason—saw female suicide rates decline by around 20 percent over a twenty-year period (male suicide rates stayed relatively constant). The passage of unilateral-divorce legislation also correlated with large declines in domestic violence: male-on-female abuse dropped by 36 percent over ten years, female-on-male abuse dropped by 24 percent, and the number of women murdered by their husbands dropped as well. (No conclusive impact on the number of husbands murdered by their wives was found.) People aren’t just using divorce to escape miserable or abusive marriages, the study’s authors argue; rather, the presence of an easy path to divorce may have “changed the bargaining power in marriages,” by offering unhappy spouses a way out, and giving

their partners an incentive to improve their behavior. “In a society in which people can leave abusive partners,” the authors suggest, “spouses may be less likely to be abusive.”

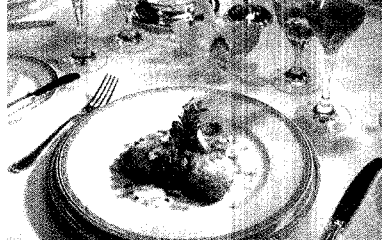
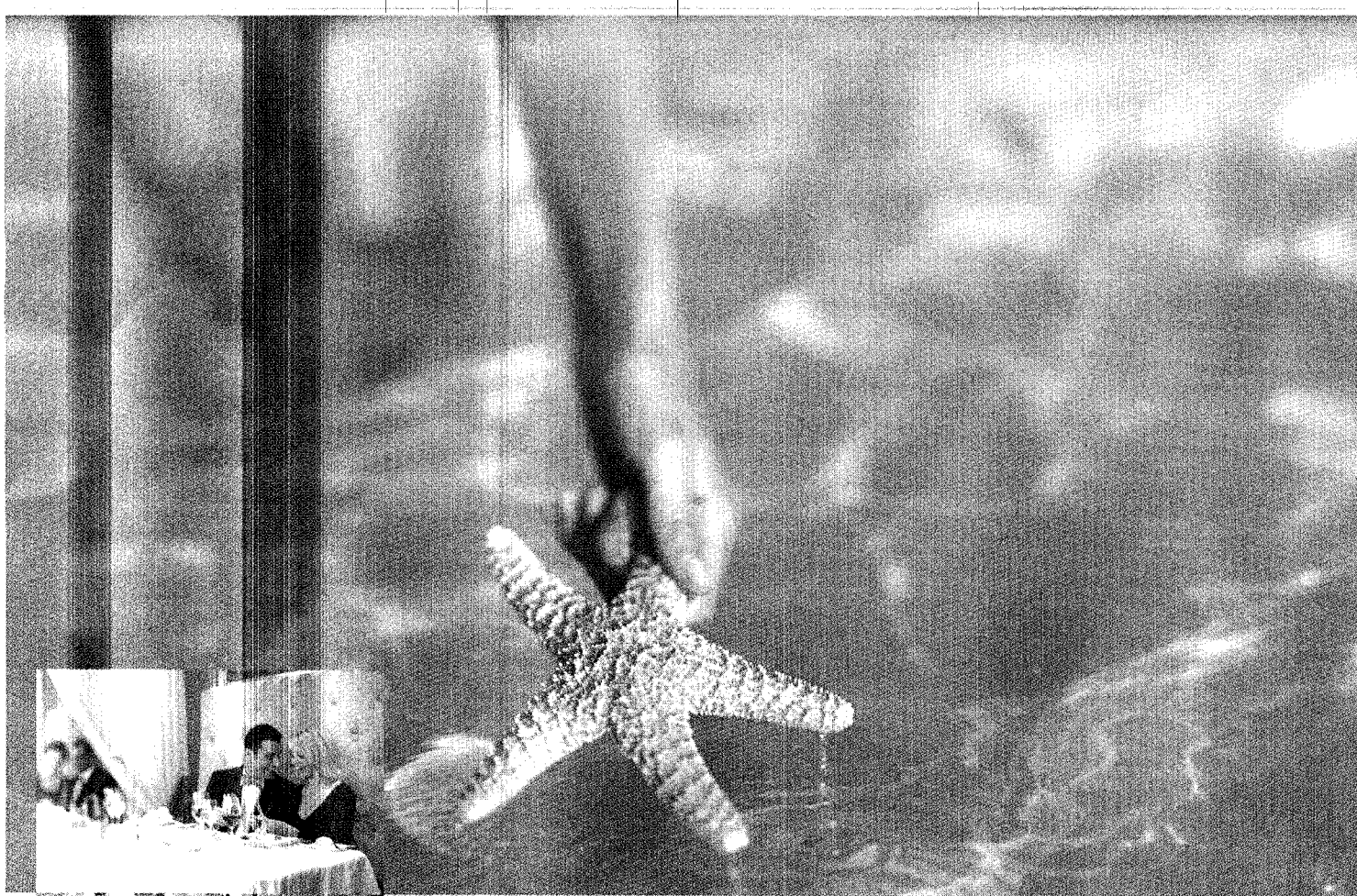
—“Bargaining in the Shadow of the Law: Divorce Laws and Family Distress,” Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, NBER

The Revenue That Dare Not Speak Its Name

While most people are wondering how gay marriage might influence American culture, the family, and the institution of marriage, the Congressional Budget Office has calculated what it might do to the deficit. If America’s approximately 600,000 cohabiting homosexual couples tied the knot and the federal government recognized their marriages, the CBO finds, the effect on taxes and spending would cut the deficit by \$350 million to \$450 million annually over the next five years. A large proportion of the new crop of joint tax filers would be hit with the marriage penalty, raising Uncle Sam’s share of their earnings. Meanwhile, spending outlays for Social Security and health care would increase only modestly or, under some assumptions, actually decline. But before socially liberal deficit hawks reach for another snort of champagne, they should remember that the windfall from same-sex marriage is insignificant alongside a federal deficit expected to hit \$445 billion for fiscal 2004.

—“The Potential Budgetary Impact of Recognizing Same-Sex Marriages,” Congressional Budget Office

For links to the reports and documents discussed in these pages visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200410/primarysources



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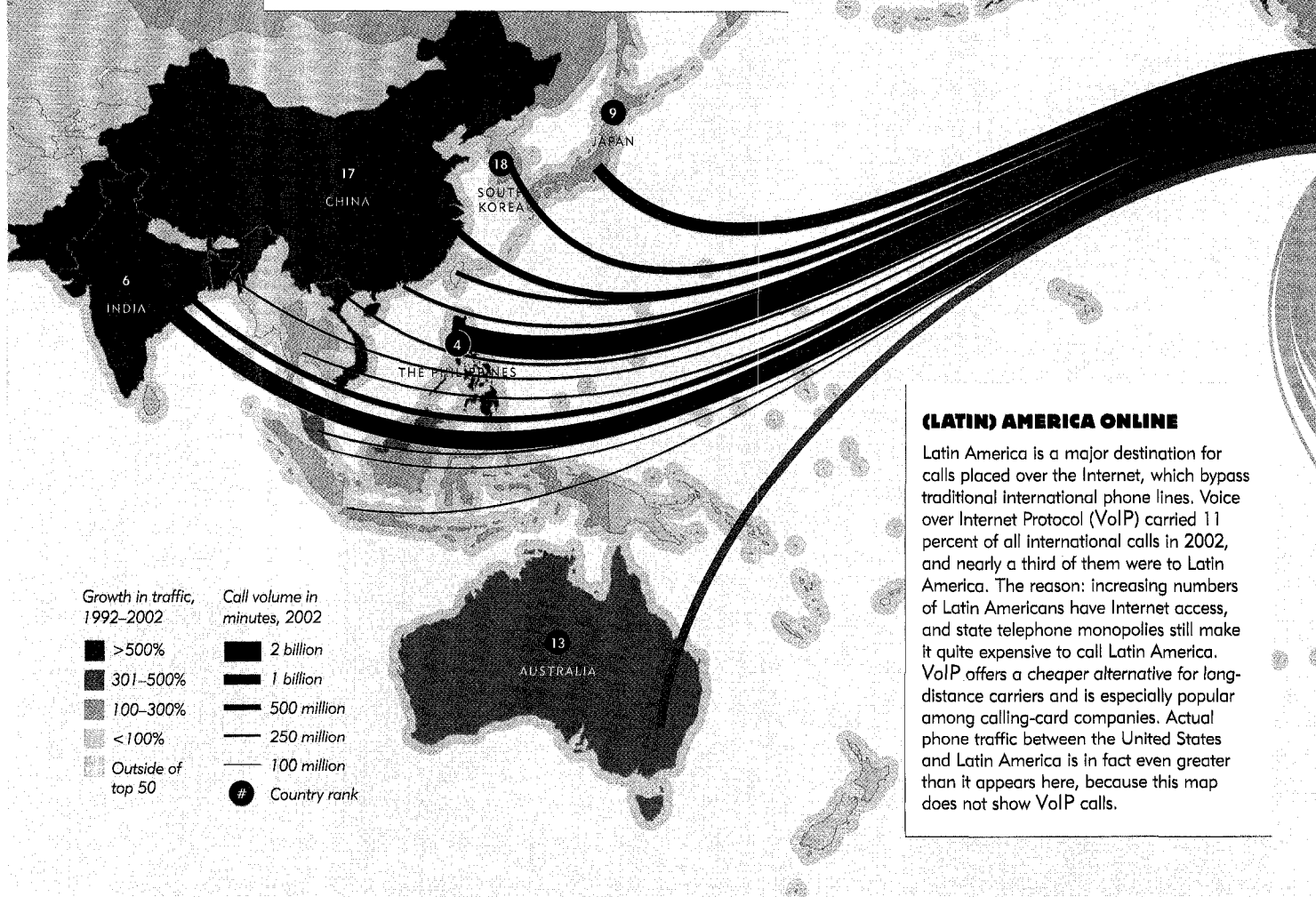
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THE INDIAN CONNECTION

By 2002 India had become America's sixth most frequent calling partner; phone traffic between the two countries had increased more than tenfold since 1992. Is growth in outsourced jobs the reason? Closer trading ties do lead to more calling, but perhaps 95 percent of the traffic related to international outsourcing takes place over private corporate networks, and thus is not counted in the data. Growing Indian emigration to the United States, falling phone charges, and rising wealth in India are more likely answers.



(LATIN) AMERICA ONLINE

Latin America is a major destination for calls placed over the Internet, which bypass traditional international phone lines. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) carried 11 percent of all international calls in 2002, and nearly a third of them were to Latin America. The reason: increasing numbers of Latin Americans have Internet access, and state telephone monopolies still make it quite expensive to call Latin America. VoIP offers a cheaper alternative for long-distance carriers and is especially popular among calling-card companies. Actual phone traffic between the United States and Latin America is in fact even greater than it appears here, because this map does not show VoIP calls.

THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

Calling All Nations

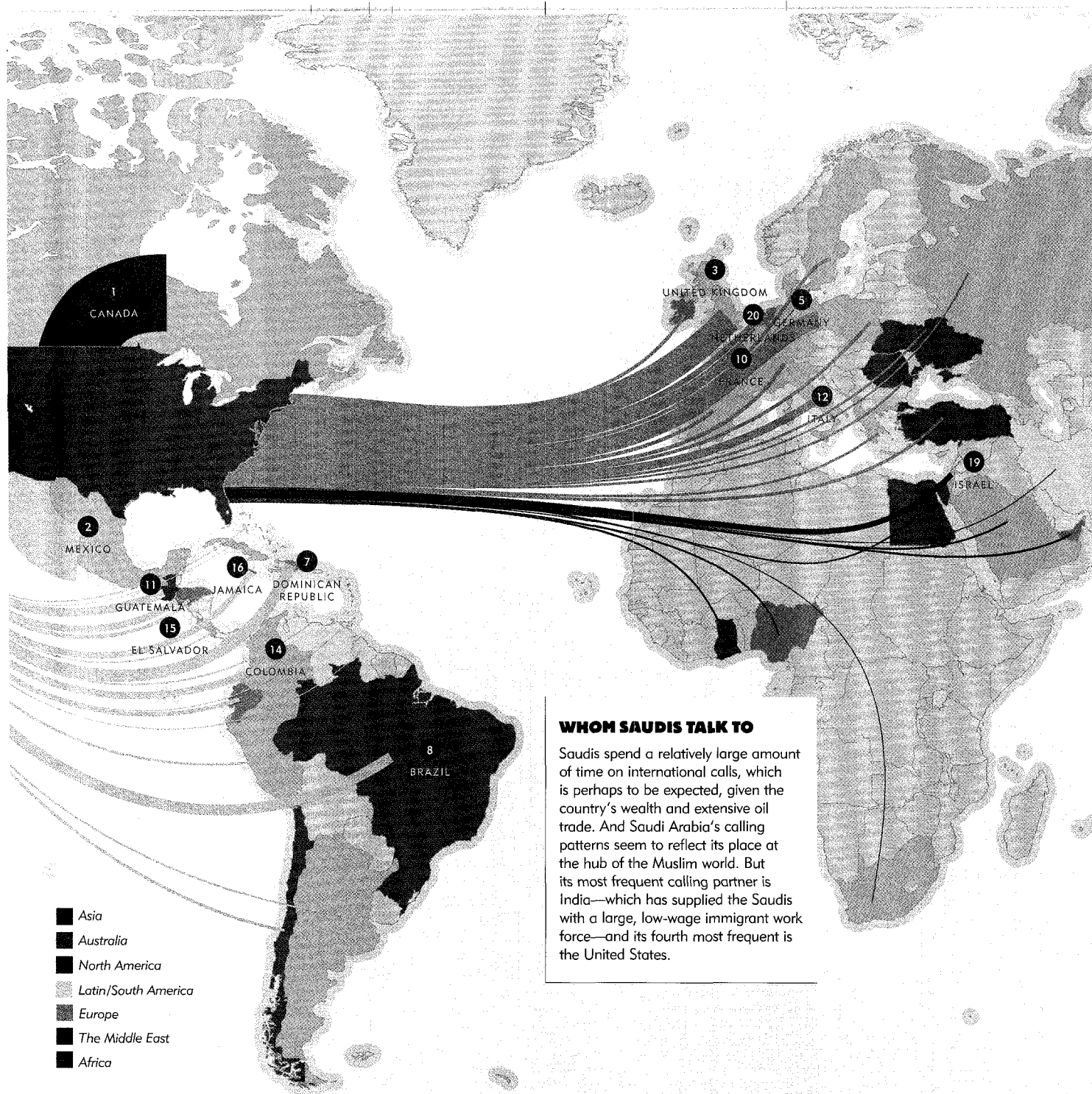
Globalization has produced an explosion in international phone traffic

Americans are sometimes accused of being isolationist, culturally incurious, and ignorant of world affairs. All this may be true—at least to some extent. But we do spend an awful lot of time talking to people around the world. In 2002 international telephone traffic between the United States and other countries reached 54.6 billion minutes. There is now more phone

traffic each year between the United States and the Philippines, to cite just one example, than between the UK and France, or France and Germany. And although many Europeans talk extensively to one another across national borders, the United States is alone in the breadth of its outreach: of the 116 intercontinental routes that each carried 100 million minutes or more

from one country to another in 2002, seventy-six involved the United States.

The volume of phone traffic into and out of this country reflects its prominence as both a trading partner and a destination for immigrants. The map above shows traffic between America and its fifty most frequent calling partners, with the bands widening as volume increases. As one would expect, thick connections link the United States to Europe; just a decade ago Europe was our largest calling partner by a substantial margin. But the connection to Latin America is now significantly thicker, and the con-



nection to Asia is nearly as thick. Only a few tendrils reach into Africa and the Middle East—regions that in many senses remain culturally disconnected from the United States.

Growth in international calling since the early 1990s illustrates the startling pace of globalization. Total phone traffic between the United States and its fifty most frequent calling partners grew by 362 percent from 1992 to 2002, according to data collected by TeleGeography, a consulting

firm for the telecommunications industry. Over the same period the volume of calls between the United States and Brazil, China, and India grew by 562 percent, 649 percent, and 1,028 percent, respectively.

What accounts for this explosive growth? The cost of international calls has declined dramatically as many countries have dismantled telecom monopolies, subjecting phone carriers to greater competition. And anybody can now put down a little cash and

pick up an international calling card or mobile phone. In this country recent immigrants have used prepaid calling cards to overcome credit and language barriers that once shut them out of international phone service (it's easier to get a card at the corner store than to deal with the phone company). As a result, the map of America's international calling patterns might easily be mistaken for a map of the immigration routes that brought us here.

—NATHAN LITTLEFIELD

BUSH'S LOST YEAR

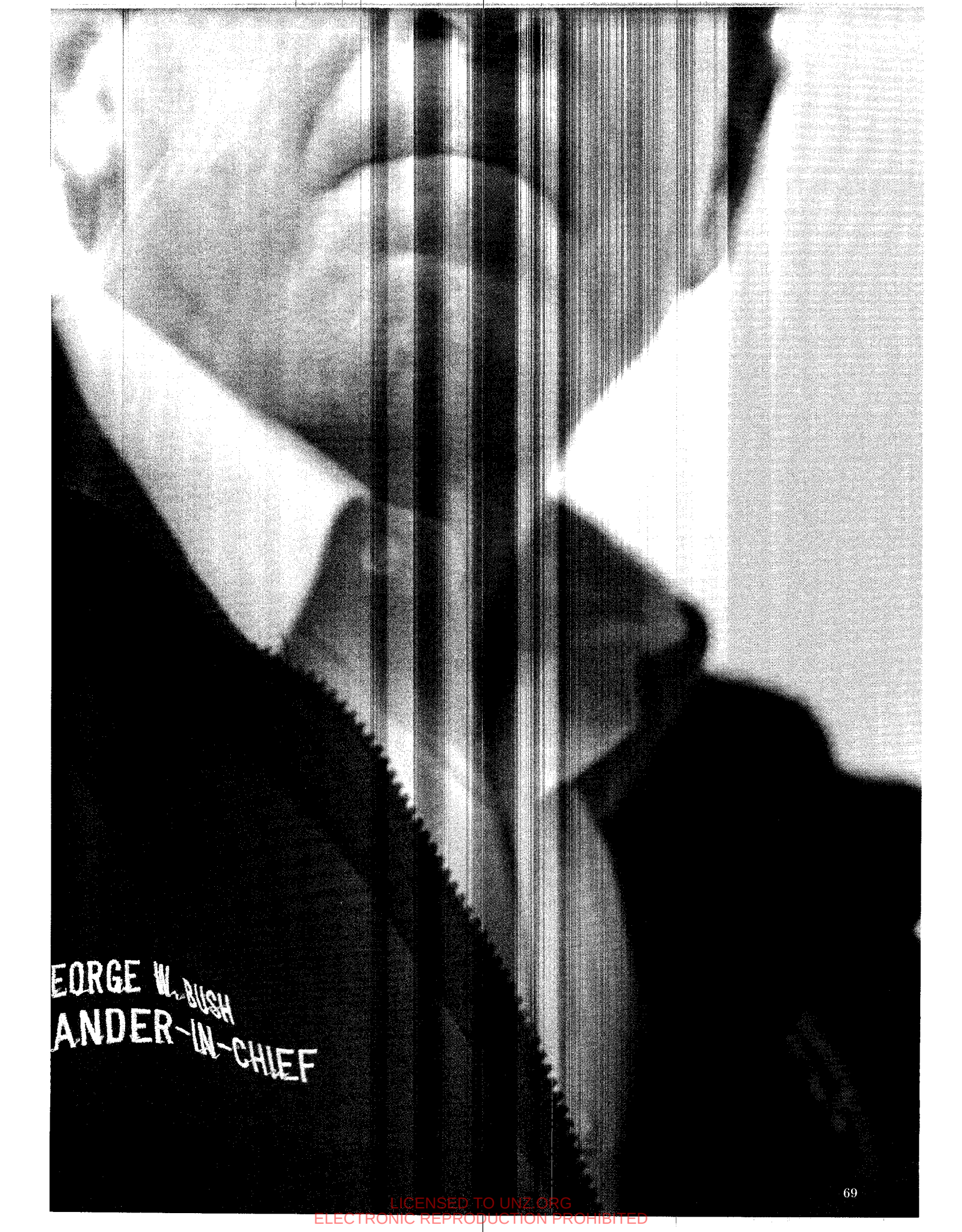
By deciding to invade Iraq, the Bush Administration decided not to do many other things: not to reconstruct Afghanistan, not to deal with the threats posed by North Korea and Iran, and not to wage an effective war on terror. An inventory of opportunities lost

BY JAMES FALLOWS

.....

I remember distinctly the way 2002 began in Washington. New Year's Day was below freezing and blustery. The next day was worse. That day, January 2, I trudged several hundred yards across the vast parking lots of the Pentagon. I was being pulled apart by the wind and was ready to feel sorry for myself, until I was shamed by the sight of miserable, frozen Army sentries at the numerous outdoor security posts that had been manned non-stop since the September 11 attacks.

James Fallows, a national correspondent for The Atlantic, has written two previous cover stories on Iraq: "Blind Into Baghdad" (January/February 2004) and "The Fifty-first State?" (November 2002), which won the National Magazine Award for Public Interest.



GEORGE W. BUSH
ANDER-IN-CHIEF

I was going for an interview with Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense. At the time, Wolfowitz's name and face were not yet familiar worldwide. He was known in Washington for offering big-picture explanations of the Administration's foreign-policy goals—a task for which the President was unsuited, the Vice President was unavailable, and most other senior Administration officials were, for various reasons, inappropriate. The National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, was still playing a background role; the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, was mainly dealing with immediate operational questions in his daily briefings about the war in Afghanistan; the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was already known to be on the losing side of most internal policy struggles.

After the interview I wrote a short article about Wolfowitz and his views for the March 2002 issue of this magazine. In some ways the outlook and choices he described then still fit the world situation two and a half years later. Even at the time, the possibility that the Administration's next move in the war on terror would be against Iraq, whether or not Iraq proved to be involved in the 9/11 hijackings, was under active discussion. When talking with me Wolfowitz touched briefly on the case for removing Saddam Hussein, in the context of the general need to reduce tyranny in the Arab-Islamic world.

But in most ways the assumptions and tone of the conversation now seem impossibly remote. At the beginning of 2002 the United States still operated in a climate of worldwide sympathy and solidarity. A broad range of allies supported its anti-Taliban efforts in Afghanistan, and virtually no international Muslim leaders had denounced them. President Bush was still being celebrated for his eloquent speech expressing American resolve, before a joint session of Congress on September 20. His deftness in managing domestic and international symbols was typified by his hosting an end-of-Ramadan ceremony at the White House in mid-December, even as battle raged in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan, on the Pakistani border. At the start of 2002 fewer than 10,000 U.S. soldiers were deployed overseas as part of the war on terror, and a dozen Americans had died in combat. The United States had not captured Osama bin Laden, but it had routed the Taliban leadership that sheltered him, and seemed to have put al-Qaeda on the run.

Because of the quick and, for Americans, nearly bloodless victory over the Taliban, the Administration's national-security team had come to epitomize competence. During our talk Wolfowitz referred to "one reason this group of people work very well together," by which he meant that Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell, and many others, including himself, had collaborated for years, from the Reagan Administration through the 1991 Gulf War and afterward. From this experience they had developed a shared understanding of the nuances of "how to use force effectively," which they

were now applying. In retrospect, the remarkable thing about Wolfowitz's comment was the assumption—which I then had no reason to challenge—that Bush's foreign-policy team was like a great business or sporting dynasty, which should be examined for secrets of success.

As I listen to the tape of that interview now, something else stands out: how expansive and unhurried even Wolfowitz sounded. "Even" Wolfowitz because since then he has become the symbol of an unrelenting drive toward war with Iraq. We now know that within the Administration he was urging the case for "regime change" there immediately after 9/11. But when speaking for the record, more than a year before that war began, he stressed how broad a range of challenges the United States would have to address, and over how many years, if it wanted to contain the sources of terrorism. It would need to find ways to "lance the boil" of growing anti-Americanism, as it had done during the Reagan years by supporting democratic reform in South Korea and the Philippines. It would have to lead the Western world in celebrating and welcoming Turkey as the most successfully modernized Muslim country. It would need to understand that in the long run the most important part of America's policy was its moral example—that America stands for things "the rest of the world wants for itself."

I also remember the way 2002 ended. By late December some 200,000 members of the U.S. armed forces were en route to staging areas surrounding Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of people had turned out on the streets of London, Rome, Madrid, and other cities to protest the impending war. That it was impending was obvious, despite ongoing negotiations at the United Nations. Within weeks of the 9/11 attacks President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld had asked to see plans for a possible invasion of Iraq. Congress voted to authorize the war in October. Immediately after the vote, planning bureaus inside the Pentagon were told to be ready for combat at any point between then and the following April. (Operation Iraqi Freedom actually began on March 19.) Declaring that it was impossible to make predictions about a war that might not occur, the Administration refused to discuss plans for the war's aftermath—or its potential cost. In December the President fired Lawrence Lindsey, his chief economic adviser, after Lindsey offered a guess that the total cost might be \$100 billion to \$200 billion. As it happened, Lindsey's controversial estimate held up very well. By this summer, fifteen months after fighting began in Iraq, appropriations for war and occupation there totaled about \$150 billion. With more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers still based in Iraq, the outlays will continue indefinitely at a rate of about \$5 billion a month—much of it for fuel, ammunition, spare parts, and other operational needs. All this is at striking variance with the pre-war insistence by Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz that Iraq's oil money, plus contributions from

PHOTO PAGES 68-69: CHRISTOPHER MORRIS/VII

allies, would minimize the financial burden on Americans.

Despite the rout of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, terror attacks, especially against Americans and Europeans, were rising at the end of 2002 and would continue to rise through 2003. Some 400 people worldwide had died in terror attacks in 2000, and some 300 in 2001, apart from the 3,000-plus killed on September 11. In 2002 more than 700 were killed, including 200 when a bomb exploded outside a Bali nightclub in October.

Whereas at the beginning of the year Paul Wolfowitz had sounded expansive about the many avenues the United States had to pursue in order to meet the terror threat, by the end of the year the focus was solely on Iraq, and the Administration's tone was urgent. "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction," Vice President Cheney said in a major speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars just before Labor Day. "There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us." Two weeks later, as Congress prepared for its vote to authorize the war, Condoleezza Rice said on CNN, "We do know that [Saddam Hussein] is actively pursuing a nuclear weapon ... We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

On the last day of the year President Bush told reporters at his ranch in Texas, "I hope this Iraq situation will be resolved peacefully. One of my New Year's resolutions is to work to deal with these situations in a way so that they're resolved peacefully." As he spoke, every operating branch of the government was preparing for war.

September 11, 2001, has so often been described as a "hinge event" that it is tempting to think no other events could rival its significance. Indeed, as a single shocking moment that changed Americans' previous assumptions, the only modern comparisons are Pearl Harbor and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. But as 9/11 enters history, it seems likely that the aftermath, especially the decisions made during 2002, will prove to be as significant as the attack itself. It is obviously too early to know the full historical effect of the Iraq campaign. The biggest question about post-Saddam Iraq—whether it is headed toward stability or toward new tyranny and chaos—may not be answered for years.

But the biggest question about the United States—whether its response to 9/11 has made it safer or more vulnerable—can begin to be answered. Over the past two years I have been talking with a group of people at the working level of America's anti-terrorism efforts. Most are in the military, the intelligence agencies, and the diplomatic service; some are in think tanks and nongovernmental agencies. I have come to trust them, because most of them have no partisan ax to grind with the Administration (in the nature of things, soldiers and spies are mainly Republicans), and because they have so far been proved right. In

the year before combat started in Iraq, they warned that occupying the country would be far harder than conquering it. As the occupation began, they pointed out the existence of plans and warnings the Administration seemed determined to ignore.

As a political matter, whether the United States is now safer or more vulnerable is of course ferociously controversial. That the war was necessary—and beneficial—is the Bush Administration's central claim. That it was not is the central claim of its critics. But among national-security professionals there is surprisingly little controversy. Except for those in government and in the opinion industries whose job it is to defend the Administration's record, they tend to see America's response to 9/11 as a catastrophe. I have sat through arguments among soldiers and scholars about whether the invasion of Iraq should be considered the worst strategic error in American history—or only the worst since Vietnam. Some of these people argue that the United States had no choice but to fight, given a pre-war consensus among its intelligence agencies that Iraq actually had WMD supplies. Many say that things in Iraq will eventually look much better than they do now. But about the

"Let me tell you my gut feeling," a senior figure at a military-sponsored think tank told me recently. "In my view we are much, much worse off now than when we went into Iraq. That is not a partisan position. I voted for these guys."

conduct and effect of the war in Iraq one view prevails: it has increased the threats America faces, and has reduced the military, financial, and diplomatic tools with which we can respond.

"Let me tell you my gut feeling," a senior figure at one of America's military-sponsored think tanks told me recently, after we had talked for twenty minutes about details of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. "If I can be blunt, the Administration is full of shit. In my view we are much, much worse off now than when we went into Iraq. That is not a partisan position. I voted for these guys. But I think they are incompetent, and I have had a very close perspective on what is happening. Certainly in the long run we have harmed ourselves. We are playing to the enemy's political advantage. Whatever tactical victories we may gain along the way, this will prove to be a strategic blunder."

This man will not let me use his name, because he is still involved in military policy. He cited the experiences of Joseph Wilson, Richard Clarke, and Generals Eric Shinseki

and Anthony Zinni to illustrate the personal risks of openly expressing his dissenting view. But I am quoting him anonymously—as I will quote some others—because his words are representative of what one hears at the working level.

To a surprising extent their indictment doesn't concentrate on the aspect of the problem most often discussed in public: exactly why the United States got the WMD threat so wrong. Nor does it involve a problem I have previously discussed in this magazine (see "Blind Into Baghdad," January/February *Atlantic*): the Administration's failure, whether deliberate or inadvertent, to make use of the careful and extensive planning for postwar Iraq that had been carried out by the State Department, the CIA, various branches of the military, and many other organizations. Rather, these professionals argue that by the end of 2002 the decisions the Administration had made—and avoided making—through the course of the year had left the nation less safe, with fewer positive options. Step by step through 2002 America's war on terror became little more than its preparation for war in Iraq.

Because of that shift, the United States succeeded in

"The plan for Afghanistan was affected by a predisposition to go into Iraq," says Richard Clarke. "The result is that they didn't have enough people to go in and stabilize the country, nor to make sure [bin Laden and his associates] didn't get out."

removing Saddam Hussein, but at this cost: The first front in the war on terror, Afghanistan, was left to fester, as attention and money were drained toward Iraq. This in turn left more havens in Afghanistan in which terrorist groups could reconstitute themselves; a resurgent opium-poppy economy to finance them; and more of the disorder and brutality the United States had hoped to eliminate. Whether or not the strong international alliance that began the assault on the Taliban might have brought real order to Afghanistan is impossible to say. It never had the chance, because America's premature withdrawal soon fractured the alliance and curtailed postwar reconstruction. Indeed, the campaign in Afghanistan was warped and limited from the start, by a pre-existing desire to save troops for Iraq.

A full inventory of the costs of war in Iraq goes on. President Bush began 2002 with a warning that North Korea and Iran, not just Iraq, threatened the world because of the nuclear weapons they were developing. With the United States preoccupied by Iraq, these other two countries surged ahead. They have been playing a game of chess,

or nerves, against America—and if they have not exactly won, they have advanced by several moves. Because it lost time and squandered resources, the United States now has no good options for dealing with either country. It has fewer deployable soldiers and weapons; it has less international leverage through the "soft power" of its alliances and treaties; it even has worse intelligence, because so many resources are directed toward Iraq.

At the beginning of 2002 the United States imported over 50 percent of its oil. In two years we have increased that figure by nearly 10 percent. The need for imported oil is the fundamental reason the United States must be deferential in its relationship with Saudi Arabia. Revenue from that oil is the fundamental reason that extremist groups based in Saudi Arabia were so rich. After the first oil shocks, in the mid-1970s, the United States took steps that reduced its imports of Persian Gulf oil. The Bush Administration could have made similar steps a basic part of its anti-terrorism strategy, and could have counted on making progress: through most of 2002 the Administration could assume bipartisan support for nearly anything it proposed. But its only such suggestion was drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Before America went to war in Iraq, its military power seemed limitless. There was less need to actually apply it when all adversaries knew that any time we did so we would win. Now the limits on our military's manpower and sustainability are all too obvious. For example, the Administration announced this summer that in order to maintain troop levels in Iraq, it would withdraw 12,500 soldiers from South Korea. The North Koreans, the Chinese, the Iranians, the Syrians, and others who have always needed to take into account the chance of U.S. military intervention now realize that America has no stomach for additional wars. Before Iraq the U.S. military was turning away qualified applicants. Now it applies "stop-loss" policies that forbid retirement or resignation by volunteers, and it has mobilized the National Guard and Reserves in a way not seen since World War II.

Because of outlays for Iraq, the United States cannot spend \$150 billion for other defensive purposes. Some nine million shipping containers enter American ports each year; only two percent of them are physically inspected, because inspecting more would be too expensive. The Department of Homeland Security, created after 9/11, is a vast grab-bag of federal agencies, from the Coast Guard to the Border Patrol to the former Immigration and Naturalization Service; ongoing operations in Iraq cost significantly more each month than all Homeland Security expenses combined. The department has sought to help cities large and small to improve their "first responder" systems, especially with better communications for their fire and emergency medical services. This summer a survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that fewer than a quarter of 231 major cities under review had received any of the aid they expected. An internal budget memo from the Administration was

leaked this past spring. It said that outlays for virtually all domestic programs, including homeland security, would have to be cut in 2005—and the federal budget deficit would still be more than \$450 billion.

Worst of all, the government-wide effort to wage war in Iraq crowded out efforts to design a broader strategy against Islamic extremists and terrorists; to this day the Administration has articulated no comprehensive long-term plan. It dismissed out of hand any connection between policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and increasing tension with many Islamic states. Regime change in Iraq, it said, would have a sweeping symbolic effect on worldwide sources of terror. That seems to have been true—but in the opposite way from what the President intended. It is hard to find a counterterrorism specialist who thinks that the Iraq War has reduced rather than increased the threat to the United States.

And here is the startling part. There is no evidence that the President and those closest to him ever talked systematically about the “opportunity costs” and tradeoffs in their decision to invade Iraq. No one has pointed to a meeting, a memo, a full set of discussions, about what America would gain and lose.

THE PRELUDE: LATE 2001

Success in war requires an understanding of who the enemy is, what resources can be used against him, and how victory will be defined. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11 America’s expert agencies concluded that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda were almost certainly responsible for the attacks—and that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was providing them with sanctuary. Within the government there was almost no dispute, then or later, about the legitimacy and importance of destroying that stronghold. Indeed, the main criticism of the initial anti-Taliban campaign was that it took so long to start.

In his book *Against All Enemies* the former terrorism adviser Richard Clarke says it was “plainly obvious” after September 11 that “al Qaeda’s sanctuary in Taliban-run Afghanistan had to be occupied by U.S. forces and the al Qaeda leaders killed.” It was therefore unfortunate that the move against the Taliban was “slow and small.” Soon after the attacks President Bush created an interagency Campaign Coordination Committee to devise responses to al-Qaeda, and named Clarke its co-chairman. Clarke told me that this group urged a “rapid, no-holds-barred” retaliation in Afghanistan—including an immediate dispatch of troops to Afghanistan’s borders to cut off al-Qaeda escape routes.

But the Administration was unwilling to use overwhelming power in Afghanistan. The only authorized account of how the “principals”—the big shots of the Administration—felt and thought at this time is in Bob Woodward’s books *Bush at War* (2002) and *Plan of Attack* (2004), both

based on interviews with the President and his senior advisers. To judge by *Bush at War*, Woodward’s more laudatory account, a major reason for delay in attacking the Taliban had to do with “CSAR”—combat search and rescue teams. These were meant to be in place before the first aerial missions, so that they could go to the aid of any American pilot who might be downed. Preparations took weeks. They involved negotiations with the governments of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for basing rights, the slow process of creating and equipping support airstrips in remote mountainous regions, and the redeployment of far-flung aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf.

“The slowness was in part because the military weren’t ready and they needed to move in the logistics support, the refueling aircraft, all of that,” Richard Clarke told me. “But through this time the President kept saying to the Taliban, ‘You still have an opportunity to come clean with us.’ Which I thought—and the State Department thought—was silly. We’d already told them in advance that if this happened we were going to hold them personally responsible.” Laurence Pope, a former ambassador to Chad, made a similar point when I spoke with him. Through the late 1990s Pope was the political adviser to General Zinni, who as the head of U.S. Central Command was responsible for Iraq and Afghanistan. Pope had run war games concerning assaults on both countries. “We had warned the Taliban repeatedly about Osama bin Laden,” he told me, referring to the late Clinton years. “There was no question [after 9/11] that we had to take them on and deny that sanctuary to al-Qaeda. We should have focused like a laser on bin Laden and taking down al-Qaeda, breaking crockery in the neighborhood if necessary.”

The crockery he was referring to included the government of Pakistan, which viewed the Pashtun tribal areas along the Afghan border as ungovernable. In the view of Pope and some others, the United States should have insisted on going into these areas right away, either with Pakistani troops or on its own—equipped with money to buy support, weapons, or both. This might have caused some regional and international disruption—but less than later invading Iraq.

It was on October 6, three and a half weeks after the attacks, that President Bush issued his final warning that “time was running out” for the Taliban to turn over bin Laden. The first cruise-missile strikes occurred the next day. The first paramilitary teams from the CIA and Special Forces arrived shortly thereafter; the first regular U.S. combat troops were deployed in late November. Thus, while the United States prepared for its response, Osama bin Laden, his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the rest of their ruling Shura Council had almost two months to flee and hide.

Opinions vary about exactly how much difference it would have made if the United States had killed or captured al-Qaeda’s leaders while the World Trade Center ruins were

The middle can be a perfect

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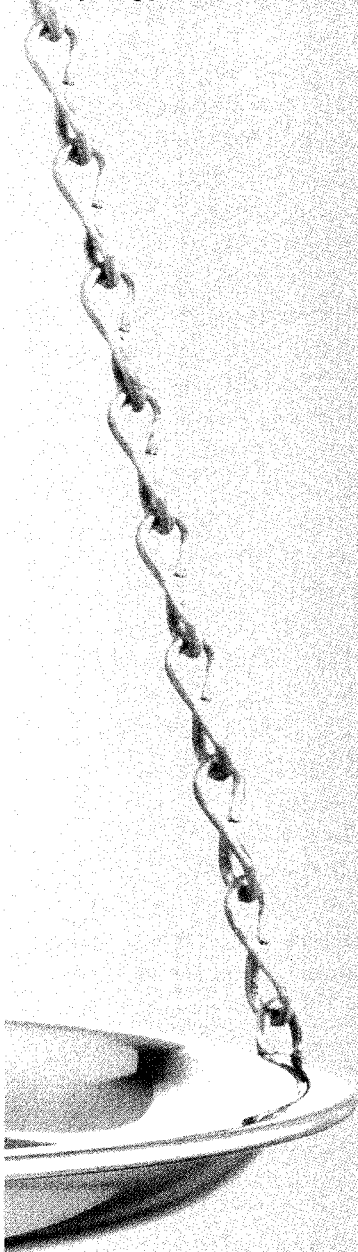


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still smoldering. But no one disputes that the United States needed to move immediately against al-Qaeda, and in the most complete and decisive way possible. And there is little disagreement about what happened next. The military and diplomatic effort in Afghanistan was handicapped from the start because the Administration had other concerns, and it ended badly even though it started well.

WINTER 2001–2002: WAR ON THE CHEAP

By the beginning of 2002 U.S. and Northern Alliance forces had beaten the Taliban but lost bin Laden. At that point the United States faced a consequential choice: to bear down even harder in Afghanistan, or to shift the emphasis in the global war on terror (GWOT, as it is known in the trade) somewhere else.

A version of this choice between Afghanistan and “somewhere else” had in fact been made at the very start of the Administration’s response to the 9/11 attacks. As Clarke, Woodward, and others have reported, during the top-level meetings at Camp David immediately after the attacks Paul Wolfowitz forcefully argued that Saddam Hussein was so threatening, and his overthrow was so “doable,” that he had to be included in the initial military response. “The ‘Afghanistan first’ argument prevailed, basically for the reasons that Colin Powell advocated,” Richard Clarke told me. “He said that the American people just aren’t going to understand if you don’t do something in Afghanistan right away—and that the lack of causal connection between Iraq and 9/11 would make it difficult to make the case for that war.”

But Afghanistan first did not mean Afghanistan only. Clarke reminded me that he had prepared a memo on anti-terrorism strategy for the President’s review before September 11. When it came back, on September 17, Clarke noticed only one significant change: the addition of a paragraph asking the Defense Department to prepare war plans for Iraq. Throughout the fall and winter, as U.S. troops were deployed in Afghanistan, Bush asked for and received increasingly detailed briefings from General Tommy Franks about the forces that might later be necessary in Iraq. According to many people who observed the process, the stated and unstated need to be ready for Saddam Hussein put a serious crimp in the U.S. effort against bin Laden and the Taliban.

The need to reserve troops for a likely second front in Iraq was one factor, though not the only one, in the design of the U.S. battle plan for Afghanistan. Many in the press (including me) marveled at America’s rapid move against the Taliban for the ingenuity of its tactics. Instead of sending in many thousands of soldiers, the Administration left much of the actual fighting to the tribes of the Northern Alliance. Although the U.S. forces proved unable to go in fast, they certainly went in light—the Special Forces soldiers who chose targets for circling B-52s while picking

their way through mountains on horseback being the most famous example. And they very quickly won. All this was exactly in keeping with the “transformation” doctrine that Donald Rumsfeld had been emphasizing in the Pentagon, and it reflected Rumsfeld’s determination to show that a transformed military could substitute precision, technology, and imagination for sheer manpower.

But as would later become so obvious in Iraq, ousting a regime is one thing, and controlling or even pacifying a country is something else. For a significant group of military and diplomatic officials within the U.S. government, winning this “second war,” for post-combat stability in Afghanistan, was a crucial step in the Administration’s long-term efforts against al-Qaeda. Afghanistan had, after all, been the site of al-Qaeda’s main training camps. The Taliban who harbored al-Qaeda had originally come to power as an alternative to warlordism and an economy based on extortion and drugs, so the United States could ill afford to let the country revert to the same rule and economy.

In removing the Taliban, the United States had acted as a genuine liberator. It came to the task with clean hands and broad international support. It had learned from the Soviet Union the folly of trying to hold Afghanistan by force. But it did not have to control the entire country to show that U.S. intervention could have lasting positive effects. What it needed, according to the “second war” group, was a sustained military, financial, and diplomatic effort to keep Afghanistan from sinking back toward chaos and thus becoming a terrorist haven once again.

“Had we seen Afghanistan as anything other than a sideshow,” says Larry Goodson, a scholar at the Army War College who spent much of 2002 in Afghanistan, “we could have stepped up both the economic and security presence much more quickly than we did. Had Iraq not been what we were ginning up for in 2002, when the security situation in Afghanistan was collapsing, we might have come much more quickly to the peacekeeping and ‘nation-building’ strategy we’re beginning to employ now.” Iraq, of course, *was* what we were ginning up for, and the effects on Afghanistan were more important, if subtler, than has generally been discussed.

I asked officials, soldiers, and spies whether they had witnessed tradeoffs—specific transfers of manpower—that materially affected U.S. success in Afghanistan, and the response of Thomas White was typical: not really. During the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, White was Secretary of the Army. Like most other people I spoke with, he offered an example or two of Iraq-Afghanistan tradeoffs, mainly involving strain on Special Forces or limits on electronic intelligence from the National Security Agency. Another man told me that NSA satellites had to be “boreholed” in a different direction—that is, aimed directly at sites in Iraq, rather than at Afghanistan. But no one said that changes like these had really been decisive. What did mat-



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ter, according to White and nearly everyone else I spoke with, was the knowledge that the “center of gravity” of the anti-terrorism campaign was about to shift to Iraq. That dictated not just the vaunted “lightness” of the invasion but also the decision to designate allies for crucial tasks: the Northern Alliance for initial combat, and the Pakistanis for closing the border so that al-Qaeda leaders would not escape. In the end neither ally performed its duty the way the Americans had hoped. The Northern Alliance was far more motivated to seize Kabul than to hunt for bin Laden.

The shift of attention to Iraq had another destructive effect on efforts to battle al-Qaeda: the diversion of the CIA’s limited supply of Arabic-speakers and Middle East specialists to support the mounting demand for intelligence on Iraq.

The Pakistanis barely pretended to patrol the border. In its recent “after-action reports” the U.S. military has been increasingly critical of its own management of this campaign, but delegating the real work to less motivated allies seems to have been the uncorrectable error.

The desire to limit U.S. commitment had at least as great an effect on what happened after the fall of the Taliban. James Dobbins, who was the Bush Administration’s special envoy for Afghanistan and its first representative in liberated Kabul, told me that three decisions in the early months “really shaped” the outcome in Afghanistan. “One was that U.S. forces were not going to do peacekeeping of any sort, under any circumstances. They would remain available to hunt down Osama bin Laden and find renegade Taliban, but they were not going to have any role in providing security for the country at large. The second was that we would oppose anybody else’s playing this role outside Kabul. And this was at a time when there was a good deal of interest from other countries in doing so.” A significant reason for refusing help, according to Dobbins, was that accepting it would inevitably have tied up more American resources in Afghanistan, especially for airlifting donated supplies to foreign-led peacekeeping stations in the hinterland. The third decision was that U.S. forces would not engage in any counter-narcotics activities. One effect these policies had was to prolong the disorder in Afghanistan and increase the odds against a stable government. The absence of American or international peacekeepers guaranteed that the writ of the new Karzai government would extend, at best, to Kabul itself.

“I can’t prove this, but I believe they didn’t want to put

in a lot of regular infantry because they wanted to hold it in reserve,” Richard Clarke explains. “And the issue is the infantry. A rational military planner who was told to stabilize Afghanistan after the Taliban was gone, and who was not told that we might soon be doing Iraq, would probably have put in three times the number of infantry, plus all the logistics support ‘tail.’ He would have put in more civil-affairs units, too. Based on everything I heard at the time, I believe I can make a good guess that the plan for Afghanistan was affected by a predisposition to go into Iraq. The result of that is that they didn’t have enough people to go in and stabilize the country, nor enough people to make sure these guys didn’t get out.”

The Administration later placed great emphasis on making Iraq a showcase of Islamic progress: a society that, once freed from tyranny, would demonstrate steady advancement toward civil order, economic improvement, and, ultimately, democracy. Although Afghanistan is a far wilder, poorer country, it might have provided a better showcase, and sooner. There was no controversy about America’s involvement; the rest of the world was ready to provide aid; if it wasn’t going to become rich, it could become demonstrably less poor. The amount of money and manpower sufficient to transform Afghanistan would have been a tiny fraction of what America decided to commit in Iraq. But the opportunity was missed, and Afghanistan began a descent to its pre-Taliban warlord state.

SPRING 2002: CHAOS AND CLOSED MINDS

Early 2002 was the Administration’s first chance to look beyond its initial retaliation in Afghanistan. This could have been a time to think broadly about America’s vulnerabilities and to ask what problems might have been overlooked in the immediate response to 9/11. At this point the United States still had comfortable reserves of all elements of international power, “hard” and “soft” alike.

As the fighting wound down in Tora Bora, the Administration could in principle have matched a list of serious problems with a list of possible solutions. In his State of the Union speech, in late January, President Bush had named Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an “axis of evil.” The Administration might have weighed the relative urgency of those three threats, including uncontested evidence that North Korea was furthest along in developing nuclear weapons. It might have launched an all-out effort to understand al-Qaeda’s strengths and weaknesses—and to exploit the weak points. It might have asked whether relations with Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia needed fundamental reconsideration. For decades we had struck an inglorious bargain with the regimes in those countries: we would overlook their internal repression and their role as havens for Islamic extremists; they would not oppose us on first-order foreign-policy issues—demonstrating, for instance, a

relative moderation toward Israel. And the Saudis would be cooperative about providing oil. Maybe, after serious examination, this bargain would still seem to be the right one, despite the newly manifest dangers of Islamic extremism. But the time to ask the question was early in 2002.

The Administration might also have asked whether its approach to Israel and the Palestinians needed reconsideration. Before 9/11 it had declared a hands-off policy toward Israel and the PLO, but sooner or later all Bush's predecessors had come around to a "land for peace" bargain as the only plausible solution in the Middle East. The new Administration would never have more leverage or a more opportune moment for imposing such a deal than soon after it was attacked.

Conceivably the Administration could have asked other questions—about energy policy, about manpower in the military, about the fiscal base for a sustained war. This was an opportunity created by crisis. At the top level of the Administration attention swung fast, and with little discussion, exclusively to Iraq. This sent a signal to the working levels, where daily routines increasingly gave way to preparations for war, steadily denuding the organizations that might have been thinking about other challenges.

The Administration apparently did not consider questions like "If we pursue the war on terror by invading Iraq, might we incite even more terror in the long run?" and "If we commit so many of our troops this way, what possibilities will we be giving up?" But Bush "did not think of this, intellectually, as a comparative decision," I was told by Senator Bob Graham, of Florida, who voted against the war resolution for fear it would hurt the fight against terrorism. "It was a single decision: he saw Saddam Hussein as an evil person who had to be removed." The firsthand accounts of the Administration's decision-making indicate that the President spent most of his time looking at evidence of Saddam Hussein's threat, and significant but smaller amounts of time trying to build his coalition and hearing about the invasion plans. A man who participated in high-level planning for both Afghanistan and Iraq—and who is unnamed here because he still works for the government—told me, "There was absolutely no debate in the normal sense. There are only six or eight of them who make the decisions, and they only talk to each other. And if you disagree with them in public, they'll come after you, the way they did with Shinseki."

The three known exceptions to this pattern actually underscore the limits on top-level talks. One was the discussions at Camp David just after 9/11: they led to "Afghanistan first," which delayed rather than forestalled the concentration on Iraq. The second was Colin Powell's "You break it, you've bought it" warning to the President in the summer of 2002: far from leading to serious questions about the war, it did not even persuade the Administration to use the postwar plans devised by the State Department, the Army,

and the CIA. The third was a long memo from Rumsfeld to Bush a few months before the war began, when a campaign against Iraq was a foregone conclusion. As excerpted in *Plan of Attack*, it listed twenty-nine ways in which an invasion could backfire. "Iraq could successfully best the U.S. in public relations and persuade the world that it was a war against Muslims" was one. "There could be higher than expected collateral damage" was another. But even this memo was couched in terms of "making sure that we had done everything humanly possible to prepare [the President] for what could go wrong, to prepare so things would go right," Rumsfeld explained to Bob Woodward. And its only apparent effect was that Bush called in his military commanders to look at the war plans.

Discussions at the top were distorted in yet another way—by an unspoken effect of disagreements over the Middle East. Some connections between Iraq policy and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute are obvious. One pro-war argument was "The road to Jerusalem runs through Baghdad"—that is, once the United States had removed Saddam Hussein and the threat he posed to Israel, it could lean more effectively on Ariel Sharon and the Likud government to accept the right deal. According to this logic, America could also lean more effectively on the Palestinians and their supporters, because of the new strength it would have demonstrated by liberating Iraq. The contrary argument—"The road to Baghdad leads through Jerusalem"—appears to have been raised mainly by Tony Blair. Its point was that if the United States first took a tougher line with Sharon and recognized that the Palestinians, too, had grievances, it would have a much easier time getting allied support and Arab acquiescence for removing Saddam Hussein. There is no evidence that this was ever significantly discussed inside the Administration.

"The groups on either side of the Iraq debate basically didn't trust each other," a former senior official in the Administration told me—and the people "on either side" he was speaking of all worked for George Bush. (He, too, insisted on anonymity because he has ongoing dealings with the government.) "If it wasn't clear *why* you were saying these skeptical things about invading Iraq, there was naturally the suspicion that you were saying [them] because you opposed the Israeli position. So any argument became suspect." Suspicion ran just as strongly the other way—that officials were steadfast for war because they supported the Israeli position. In this (admittedly oversimplified) schema, the CIA, the State Department, and the uniformed military were the most skeptical of war—and, in the view of war supporters, were also the most critical of Israel. The White House (Bush, Cheney, Rice) and the Defense Department's civilian leadership were the most pro-war—and the most pro-Israel. Objectively, all these people agreed far more than they differed, but their mutual suspicions further muted dissenting views.

At the next level down, different problems had the same effect: difficulty in thinking broadly about threats and responses. An obscure-sounding bureaucratic change contributed. At the start of his second term Bill Clinton had signed PDD 56, a presidential decision directive about handling international emergencies. The idea was that, like it or not, a chaotic world would continually involve the United States in “complex contingency operations.” These were efforts, like the ones in the Balkans and East Africa, in which soldiers, diplomats, relief workers, reconstruction experts, economists, legal authorities, and many other officials from many different institutions would need to work together if any of them were to succeed. The directive set up a system for coordinating these campaigns, so that no one organization dominated the others or operated unilaterally.

When it took office, the Bush Administration revoked this plan and began working on a replacement. But nothing was on hand as of September 11. For months the response to the attacks was managed by a variety of ad hoc groups. The Campaign Coordination Committee, run by Richard Clarke and his colleague Franklin Miller, oversaw strategies against al-Qaeda. The new Domestic Preparedness Committee, run by John Ashcroft’s deputy, Larry Thompson, oversaw internal-security measures. And the “principals”—Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell, Rice, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, and a few others, including Wolfowitz, Powell’s deputy Richard Armitage, and Cheney’s aide Lewis “Scooter” Libby—met frequently to plan the showdown with Iraq. There was no established way to make sure that State knew what Defense was doing and vice versa, as became disastrously obvious after the fall of Baghdad. And there was no recognized venue for opportunity-cost discussions about the emerging Iraq policy, even if anyone had wanted them.

In the absence of other plans, initiative on every issue was increasingly taken in the Pentagon. And within the Pentagon the emphasis increasingly moved toward Iraq. In March of 2002, when U.S. troops were still engaged in Operation Anaconda on the Afghan-Pakistani border, and combat in Iraq was still a year away, inside the government Afghanistan had begun to seem like yesterday’s problem. When asked about Iraq at a press conference on March 13, Bush said merely, “All options are on the table.” By that time Tommy Franks had answered Bush’s request for battle plans and lists of potential bombing targets in Iraq.

The more experienced in government the people I interviewed were, the more likely they were to stress the importance of the mental shift in the spring of 2002. When I asked Richard Clarke whether preparations for Iraq had really taken anything crucial from Afghanistan or other efforts, he said yes, unquestionably. “They took one thing that people on the outside find hard to believe or appreciate,” he said. “Management time. We’re a huge government,

and we have hundreds of thousands of people involved in national security. Therefore you would think we could walk and chew gum at the same time. I’ve never found that to be true. You’ve got one National Security Adviser and one CIA director, and they each have one deputy. The same is true in Defense. Interestingly in terms of the military, both of these wars took place in the same ‘CINCPAC’—by which Clarke meant that both were in the realm of Tommy Franks’s Central Command, rather than in two different theaters. “It just is not credible that the principals and the deputies paid as much attention to Afghanistan or the war against al-Qaeda as they should have.”

Bush began 2002 with a warning that North Korea and Iran, not just Iraq, threatened the world with nuclear weapons. Because it lost time and squandered resources, America now has no good options for dealing with either country.

According to Michael Scheuer, a career CIA officer who spent the late 1990s as head of the agency’s anti-bin Laden team, the shift of attention had another destructive effect on efforts to battle al-Qaeda: the diversion of members of that team and the Agency’s limited supply of Arabic-speakers and Middle East specialists to support the mounting demand for intelligence on Iraq. (Because Scheuer is still on active duty at the CIA, the Agency allowed him to publish his recent book, *Imperial Hubris*, a harsh criticism of U.S. approaches to controlling terrorism, only as “Anonymous.” After we spoke, his identity was disclosed by Jason Vest, in the *Boston Phoenix*; when I met him, he declined to give his name and was introduced simply as “Mike.”) “With a finite number of people who have any kind of pertinent experience,” Scheuer told me, “there is unquestionably a sucking away of resources from Afghanistan and al-Qaeda to Iraq, just because it was a much bigger effort.”

Scheuer observed that George Tenet had claimed early in 2003 that there was enough expertise and manpower to handle both Iraq and al-Qaeda. “From inside the system that sounded like a very questionable judgment,” Scheuer said. “You start with a large group of people who have worked bin Laden and al-Qaeda and Sunni terrorism for years—and worked it every day since 9/11. Then you move a lot of people out to work the Iraq issue, and instead you have a lot of people who come in for ninety days or one hundred and twenty days, then leave. It’s like any other profession. Over time you make connections. A name comes up, and there’s nothing on file in the last two years—but

you remember that five years ago there was a guy with that name doing acts in the Philippines. If you don't have an institutional memory, you don't make the connection. When they talk about connecting the dots, the computers are important. But at the end of the day, the most important thing is that human being who's been working this issue for five or six years. You can have the best computers in the world, and you can have an ocean of information, but if you have a guy who's only been there for three weeks or three months, you're very weak."

Laurence Pope, the former ambassador, told me that Iraq monomania was particularly destructive in the spring of 2002 because of the opportunity that came and went in Afghanistan. "There was a moment of six months or so when we could have put much more pressure on the tribal areas [to get al-Qaeda], and on Pakistan, and done a better job of reconstruction in Afghanistan," he said. "In reality, the Beltway can only do one thing at a time, and because of the attention to Iraq, what should have happened in Afghanistan didn't."

So by the spring, after six months in which to consider its strategy, the Administration had radically narrowed its choices. Its expert staffers were deflected toward Iraq—and away from Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea, Israel-Palestine, the hunt for bin Laden, the assault on al-Qaeda, even China and Taiwan. Its diplomats were not squeezing Pakistan as hard as possible about chasing al-Qaeda, or Saudi Arabia about cracking down on extremists, because the United States needed their help—or at least acquiescence—in the coming war with Iraq. Its most senior officials were working out the operational details of a plan whose fundamental wisdom they had seldom, if ever, stopped to examine.

SUMMER AND FALL: THE ONE-FRONT WAR

President Bush's first major statement about his post-9/11 foreign policy had come in his State of the Union address. His second came on June 1, when he gave the graduation speech at West Point. It carefully laid out the case for a new doctrine of "pre-emptive" war. Bush didn't say "Iraq" or "Saddam Hussein," but his meaning was unmistakable. "Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies," he said. "We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long." A few weeks later Condoleezza Rice presented a fuller version of the concept, and Dick Cheney hammered home his warnings that Saddam Hussein had, beyond all doubt, acquired weapons of mass destruction. In September, Donald Rumsfeld said at a news conference that the link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda was "not debatable." By October, Bush had practically stopped referring to Osama bin Laden

in his press statements; he said of Saddam Hussein, "This is the guy that tried to kill my dad."

The Democrats still controlled the Senate, but on October 11 Majority Leader Tom Daschle led John Kerry, John Edwards, and twenty-six other Democrats in voting to authorize the war. (Authorization passed the Senate 77-23; most Democrats in the House voted against it, but it still carried there, by 296 to 133.) Democratic officials were desperate to get the vote behind them, so that in the impending midterm elections they could not be blamed for hampering the war on terrorism—in which, the Administration said, war in Iraq played an integral part.

The Cyclops-like nature of the Administration's perception of risk became more evident. Uncertain evidence about Iraq was read in the most pessimistic fashion; much more reliable evidence about other threats was ignored. Of the three members of the "axis of evil," Iraq had made the sketchiest progress toward developing nuclear weapons. In October, just before the Iraq War vote, a delegation of Americans in Pyongyang found that North Korea's nuclear-weapons program was actually up and running. As the weeks wore on, North Korea became more and more brazen. In December it reactivated a nuclear processing plant it had closed eight years earlier as part of a deal with the United States. Soon thereafter it kicked out inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency and announced that it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. North Korea was dropping even the pretense that it was not developing nuclear bombs.

Meanwhile, in August of 2002, an Iranian opposition group revealed the existence of two previously secret nuclear facilities, in Natanz and Arak. The first was devoted to uranium enrichment, the second to heavy-water production, which is a step toward producing plutonium. Months before the vote on war with Iraq, then, the United States had very strong indications that Iran was pursuing two paths toward atomic weaponry: uranium and plutonium. The indications from North Korea were at least as strong. If the very worst pre-war suspicions about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction had turned out to be true, the nuclear stakes would still have been lower than those in North Korea or Iran.

"How will history judge this period, in terms of the opportunity costs of invading Iraq?" said John Pike, the director of GlobalSecurity.org, when we spoke. "I think the opportunity cost is going to be North Korea and Iran. I mean, in 2002 it became obvious that Iran has a full-blown nuclear-weapons program under way, no ifs or buts. For the next eighteen months or so, before it's running, we have the opportunity to blow it up. But this Iraq adventure will give blowing up your enemies a bad name. The concern now has to be that the 'Iraq syndrome' will make us flinch from blowing up people who really need to be blown up."

Bombing North Korea's reactor has never been an option, since North Korea has so many retaliatory forces so close to Seoul. But whatever choices the United States had at the beginning of 2002, it has fewer and worse ones now. The North Koreans are that much further along in their program; the U.S. military is under that much more strain; international hostility to U.S. policies is that much greater. "At the rate North Korea is pumping out bomb material," Pike said, "the Japanese will realize that the missile defense we've sold them will not save them. And they will conclude that only weaponizing their plutonium will enable them to sleep easily at night. And *then* you'll have South Korea and Taiwan ..." and on through other ripple-effect scenarios. Pike says that the United States has little leverage to prevent any of this, and therefore can't afford to waste any more time in acting against North Korea.

"Are we better off in basic security than before we invaded Iraq?" asks Jeffrey Record, a professor of strategy at the Air War College and the author of the recent *Dark Victory*, a book about the Iraq War. "The answer is no. An unnecessary war has consumed American Army and other ground resources, to the point where we have nothing left in the cupboard for another contingency—for instance, should the North Koreans decide that with the Americans completely absorbed in Iraq, now is the time to do something."

"We really have four armies," an Army officer involved in Pentagon planning for the Iraq War told me. "There's the one that's deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. There's the one that's left back home in Fort Hood and other places. There's the 'modular Army,' of new brigade-sized units that are supposed to be rotated in and out of locations easily. There's the Guard and Reserve. And every one of them is being chewed up by the ops tempo." "Ops tempo" means the pace of operations, and when it is too high, equipment and supplies are being used faster than they can be replaced, troops are being deployed far longer than they expected, and training is being pared back further than it should. "We're really in dire straits with resourcing," he said. "There's not enough armor for Humvees. There's not enough fifty-caliber machine guns for the Hundred and First Airborne or the Tenth Mountain Division. A country that can't field heavy machine guns for its army—there's something wrong with the way we're doing business."

"The stress of war has hit all the services, but none harder than the Army," Sydney Freedberg wrote recently in *National Journal*. "The crucial shortfall is not in money or machines, but in manpower." More than a third of the Army's 500,000 active-duty soldiers are in Iraq or Kuwait. Freedberg referred to a study showing that fifteen of the Army's thirty-four active-duty combat units were currently deployed overseas, and wrote, "That means that nearly as many units are abroad as at home, when historical experience shows that a long-term commitment, as with the

British in Northern Ireland, requires three or four units recuperating and training for each one deployed." In the long run the U.S. military needs either more people or fewer responsibilities. At the moment, because of Iraq, it has very little slack for dealing with other emergencies that might arise.

WINTER: MISREADING THE ENEMY

President Bush's first major speech after 9/11, on September 20, 2001, was one of the outstanding addresses given by a modern President. But it introduced a destructive concept that Bush used more and more insistently through 2002. "Why do they hate us?" he asked about the terrorists. He answered that they hate what is best in us: "They hate what we see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government ... They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other." As he boiled down this thought in subsequent comments it became "They hate us for who we are" and "They hate us because we are free."

There may be people who have studied, fought against, or tried to infiltrate al-Qaeda and who agree with Bush's statement. But I have never met any. The soldiers, spies, academics, and diplomats I have interviewed are unanimous in saying that "They hate us for who we are" is dangerous claptrap. Dangerous because it is so lazily self-justifying and self-deluding: the only thing we could possibly be doing wrong is being so excellent. Claptrap because it reflects so little knowledge of how Islamic extremism has evolved.

"There are very few people in the world who are going to kill themselves so we can't vote in the Iowa caucuses," Michael Scheuer said to me. "But there's a lot of them who are willing to die because we're helping the Israelis, or because we're helping Putin against the Chechens, or because we keep oil prices low so Muslims lose money." Jeffrey Record said, "Clearly they do not *like* American society. They think it's far too libertine, democratic, Christian. But that's not the reason they attack us. If it were, they would have attacked a lot of other Western countries too. I don't notice them putting bombs in Norway. It's a combination of who we are and also our behavior."

This summer's report of the 9/11 Commission, without associating this view with Bush, was emphatic in rejecting the "hate us for who we are" view. The commission said this about the motivation of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, whom it identified as the "mastermind of the 9/11 attacks": "KSM's animus toward the United States stemmed not from his experiences there as a student, but rather from his violent disagreement with U.S. foreign policy favoring Israel." In discussing long-term strategies for dealing with extremist groups the commission said, "America's policy choices have consequences. Right or wrong, it is simply a fact that American policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian

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conflict and American actions in Iraq are dominant staples of popular commentary across the Arab and Muslim world.” The most striking aspect of the commission’s analysis is that it offered any thoughts at all about the right long-term response to Islamic extremists. The 9/11 Commission was one of several groups seeking to fill the void left by the Administration’s failure to put forward any comprehensive battle plan for a long-term campaign against terrorism. By its actions the Administration showed that the only terrorism problem it recognized was Saddam Hussein’s regime, plus the al-Qaeda leaders shown on its “most wanted” lists.

The distinction between who we are and what we do matters, because it bears on the largest question about the Iraq War: Will it bring less or more Islamic terrorism? If violent extremism is purely vengeful and irrational, there is no hope except to crush it. Any brutality along the way is an unavoidable cost. But if it is based on logic of any sort, a clear understanding of its principles could help us to weaken its appeal—and to choose tactics that are not self-defeating.

A later article will describe insights about controlling terrorism. For now the point is the strong working-level consensus that terrorists are “logical,” if hideously brutal, and that the steps in 2002 that led to war have broadened the extremists’ base. In March of 2003, just after combat began in Iraq, President Hosni Mubarak, of Egypt, warned

As a political matter, whether we are now safer or more vulnerable is ferociously controversial. But among national-security professionals there is surprisingly little controversy. They tend to see America’s response to 9/11 as a catastrophe.

that if the United States invaded, “instead of having one bin Laden, we will have one hundred bin Ladens.” Six months later, when the combat was over, Rumsfeld wrote in a confidential memo quoted in *Plan of Attack*, “We lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas [Islamic schools] and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us? ... The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists’ costs of millions.” Six months after that, as violence surged in occupied Iraq, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, in London, reported that al-Qaeda was galvanized by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As of mid-2004 it had at least 18,000

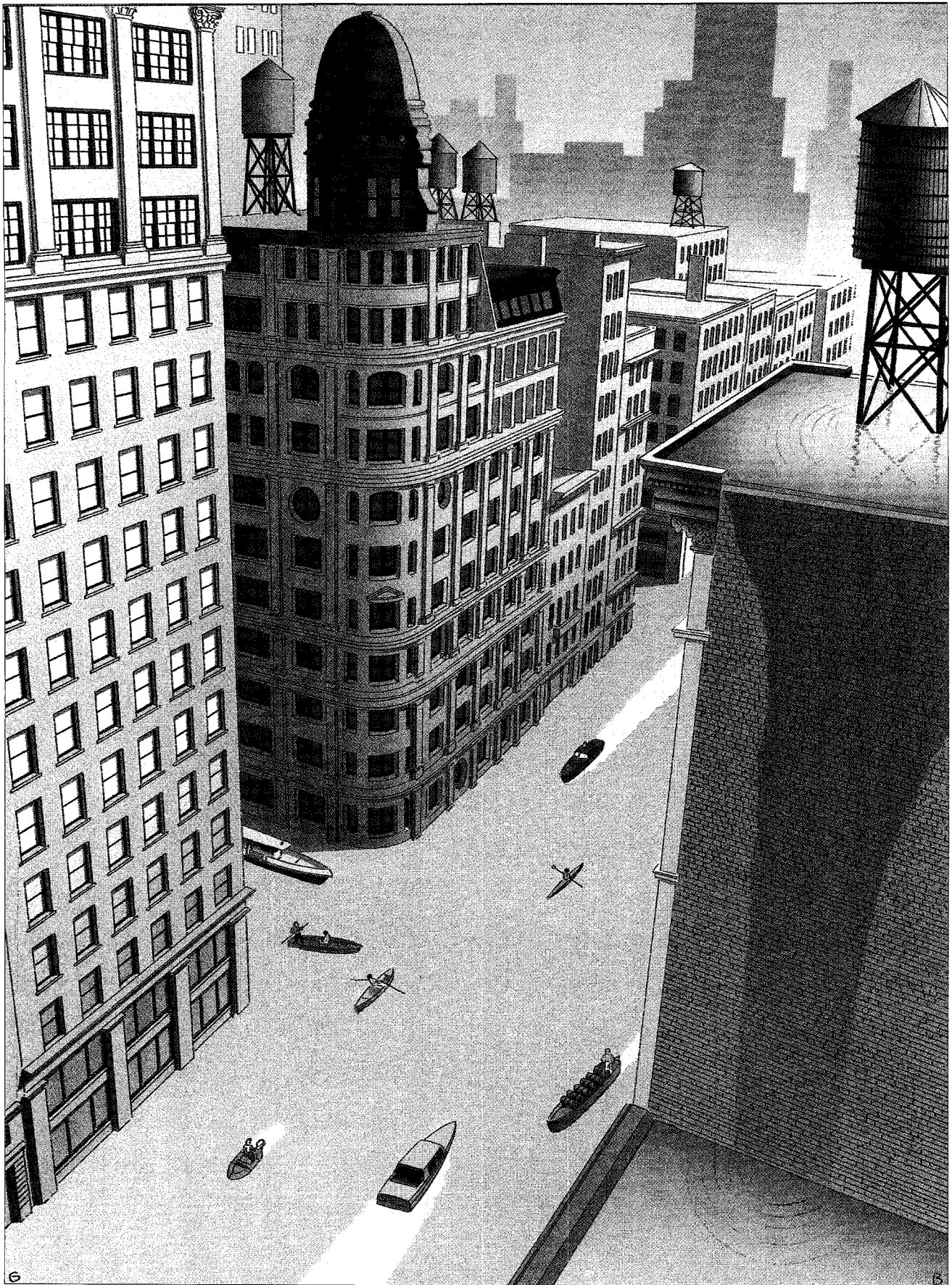
operatives in sixty countries. “Al Qaeda has fully reconstituted [and] set its sights firmly on the USA and its closest Western allies in Europe,” the report said. Meanwhile, a British parliamentary report warns that Afghanistan is likely to “implode” for lack of support.

“I have been saying for years, Osama bin Laden could never have done it without us,” a civilian adviser to the Pentagon told me this summer. “We have continued to play to his political advantage and to confirm, in the eyes of his constituency, the very claims he made about us.” Those claims are that the United States will travel far to suppress Muslims, that it will occupy their holy sites, that it will oppose the rise of Islamic governments, and that it will take their resources. “We got to Baghdad,” Michael Scheuer said, “and the first thing Rumsfeld said is, ‘We’ll accept any government as long as it’s not Islamic.’ It draws their attention to bin Laden’s argument that the United States is leading the West to annihilate Islam.” The Administration had come a long way from the end-of-Ramadan ceremony at the White House.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A YEAR

To govern is to choose, and the choices made in 2002 were fateful. The United States began that year shocked and wounded, but with tremendous strategic advantages. Its population was more closely united behind its leadership than it had been in fifty years. World opinion was strongly sympathetic. Longtime allies were eager to help; longtime antagonists were silent. The federal budget was nearly in balance, making ambitious projects feasible. The U.S. military was superbly equipped, trained, and prepared. An immediate foe was evident—and vulnerable—in Afghanistan. For the longer-term effort against Islamic extremism the Administration could draw on a mature school of thought from academics, regional specialists, and its own intelligence agencies. All that was required was to think broadly about the threats to the country, and creatively about the responses.

The Bush Administration chose another path. Implicitly at the beginning of 2002, and as a matter of formal policy by the end, it placed all other considerations second to regime change in Iraq. It hampered the campaign in Afghanistan before fighting began and wound it down prematurely, along the way losing the chance to capture Osama bin Laden. It turned a blind eye to misdeeds in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and to WMD threats from North Korea and Iran far more serious than any posed by Saddam Hussein, all in the name of moving toward a showdown with Iraq. It overused and wore out its army in invading Iraq—without committing enough troops for a successful occupation. It saddled the United States with ongoing costs that dwarf its spending for domestic security. And by every available measure it only worsened the risk of future terrorism. In every sense 2002 was a lost year. ▀



LEAK by Guy Billout

Honda's comm

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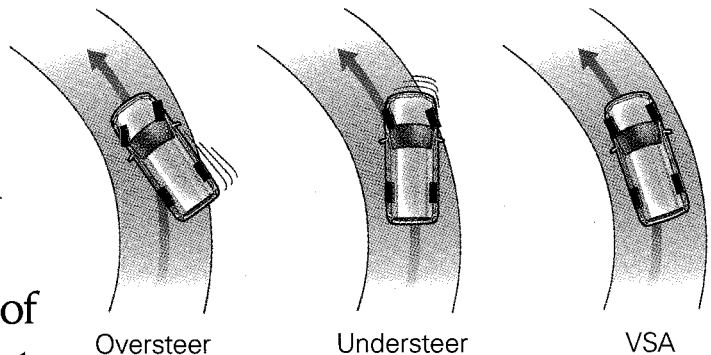
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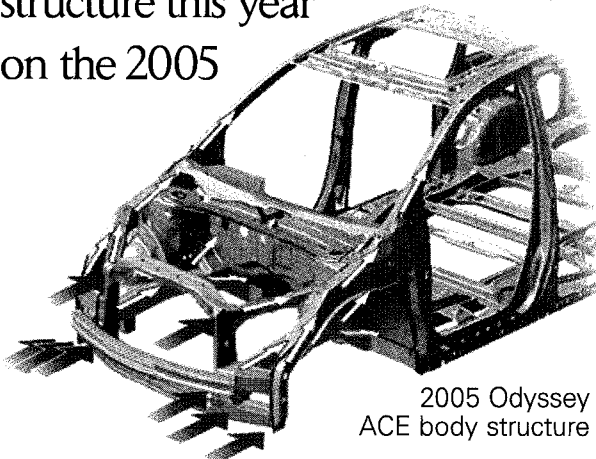
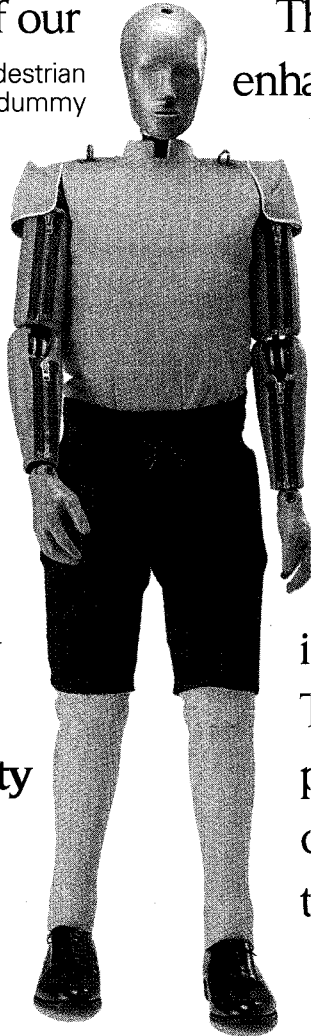
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test dummy



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THE LONG HUNT FOR OSAMA

Where has he been? How did we ever let him get away? Our correspondent—one of the few Western journalists ever to have met Osama bin Laden—traces the al-Qaeda leader's footsteps in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and describes the sometimes hapless American pursuit

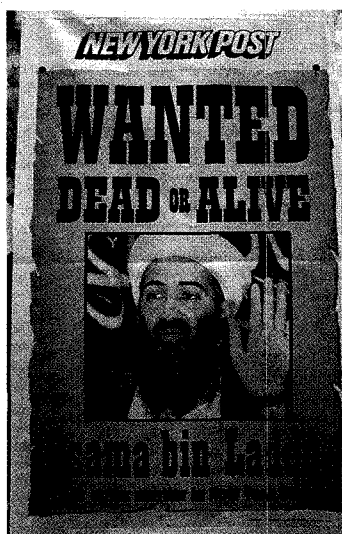
BY PETER BERGEN

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When you fly over the icy peaks of the Hindu Kush, which march in serried ranks toward the Himalayas, dividing Central Asia from the Indian subcontinent, you get a sense of the scale of the problem: Osama bin Laden may be hiding somewhere out there. Wherever he is, bin Laden continues to give substantial ideological direction to *ji*hadist movements around the globe—and so American forces are scouring the Hindu Kush to find him.

The conventional wisdom now, of course, is that tracking bin Laden down won't make much of a difference to the larger war on terrorism anyway. At a March 2002 press conference President Bush referred to bin Laden as "a person who's now been marginalized." Although it is certainly the case that the global *ji*hadist movement will carry on whatever bin Laden's fate, it would be dangerously wrong to assume that it doesn't really matter whether he is apprehended.

Finding bin Laden remains of utmost importance for three reasons. First, there is the matter of justice for the 3,000 people who died in the 9/11 attacks, and for the hundreds of other victims of al-Qaeda attacks around the world. Second, every day that bin Laden remains at liberty is a propaganda victory for al-Qaeda. Third, although bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri don't exert day-to-day control over al-Qaeda, according to Roger Cressey, a former senior U.S. counterterrorism official, they do continue to supply "broad strategic guidance" for the group's actions, and for those of its affiliates. Statements from bin Laden and, to some degree, al-Zawahiri have always been the most reliable guide to the future actions of *ji*hadist movements around the world—and this has remained the case even while both men



have been on the run. Shortly after bin Laden called for assaults against Western economic interests in October of 2002, an Indonesian disco was bombed, killing 200 Western tourists, and a suicide attack was launched at a French oil tanker steaming off the coast of Yemen. In December of 2003, after al-Zawahiri condemned Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf for supporting the campaign against al-Qaeda, Musharraf narrowly survived two assassination attempts. Around the same time, bin Laden called for attacks against members of the coalition in Iraq; subsequently terrorists bombed a British consulate and a bank in Turkey, and commuters on their

way to work in Madrid. According to U.S. intelligence officials, a plot to carry out a large-scale terror attack against the United States in the near future, possibly tied to the presidential election in November, is being directed personally by bin Laden and al-Zawahiri.

In the past year I traveled twice to Afghanistan and Pakistan to find out how the hunt for bin Laden was progressing. While in Kabul I stayed at a comfortable guesthouse owned by a British combat cameraman—a spacious villa that is reportedly the former residence of one of Osama bin Laden's four wives. After the fall of the Taliban the villa was converted to its present use. For a hundred dollars and change it's now possible to have the ambiguous pleasure of

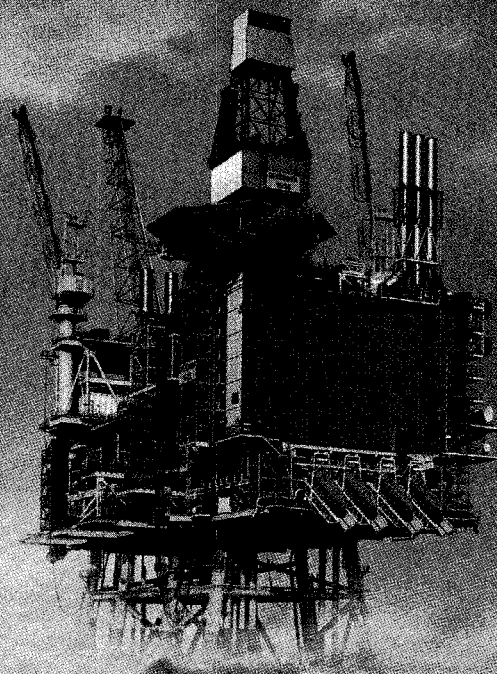
sleeping in what may once have been the marital chamber of the world's most wanted man; for me, it was an appropriate place to begin an investigation into what became of bin Laden after 9/11. My investigation included more than two dozen interviews with American, Afghan, and Pakistani officials, and discussions with several people who have met with bin Laden over the years.

Peter Bergen, a fellow at the New America Foundation and an adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies, at Johns Hopkins University, is the author of Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden (2001).

RON HAVIV/VII

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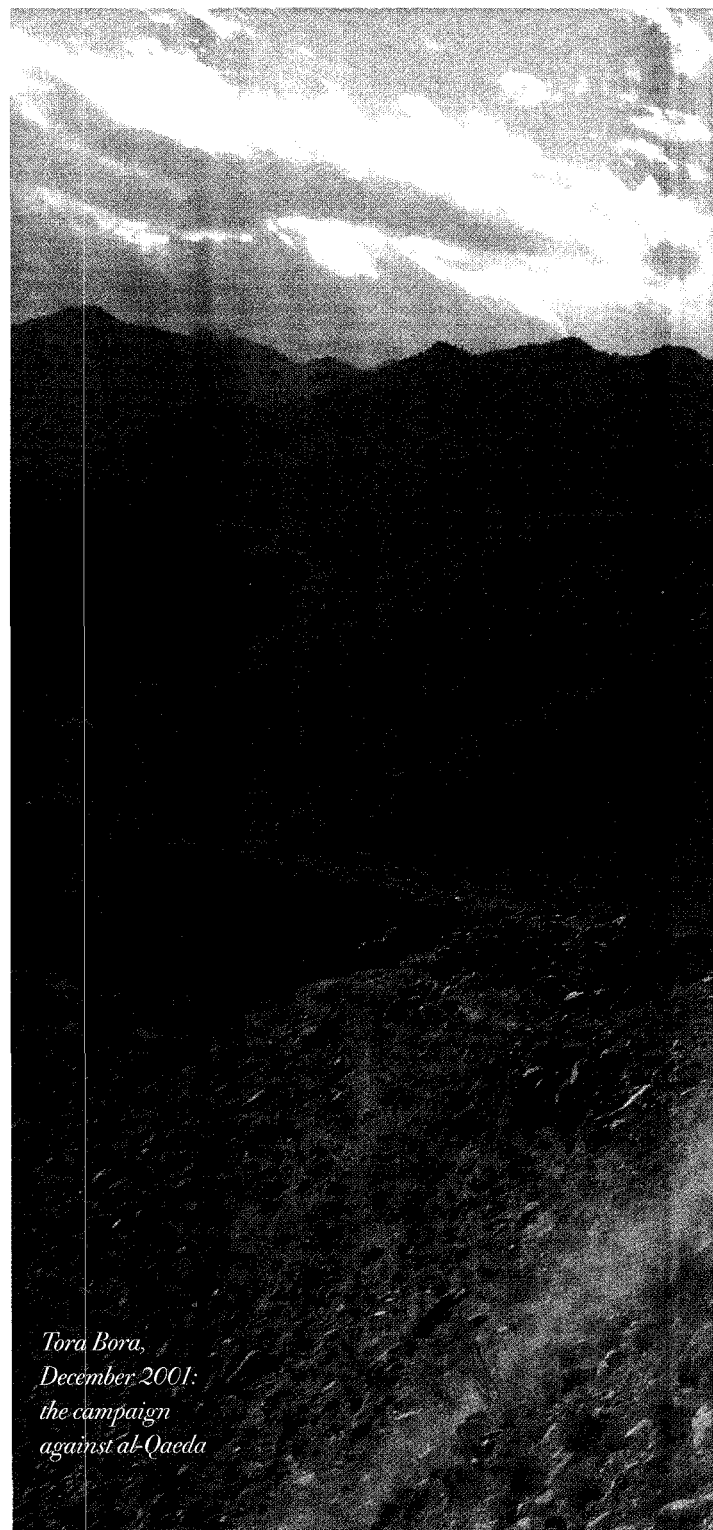
Only three people outside al-Qaeda and the Taliban are known to have spent any time with bin Laden after 9/11. Two are journalists and the third is a doctor. One of the journalists, Taysir Alouni, of al-Jazeera television, interviewed bin Laden in late October of 2001. (Alouni was later indicted in Spain for allegedly providing money to al-Qaeda.) During the al-Jazeera interview bin Laden for the first time linked himself publicly to the 9/11 attacks, after Alouni asked him, "America claims that it has proof that you are behind what happened in New York and Washington. What's your answer?" Bin Laden said, "If inciting people to do that is terrorism, and if killing those who are killing our sons is terrorism, then let history be witness that we are terrorists." At one point he said, "We practice the good terrorism."

Hamid Mir, a Pakistani who has spent several years writing a biography of bin Laden, was the other journalist. Two months after 9/11 Mir was taken to meet bin Laden somewhere in Afghanistan. "I was blindfolded," he told me, "and they gave me some pills, and I was unconscious after that. When I woke up, it was the morning of the eighth of November. I have some impression that the place where he gave the interview was not far away from Kabul. They took me into a mud house, and I was surrounded by armed Arabs. 'Welcome! Welcome!' they said as I entered."

Eventually Mir was taken to see bin Laden, who was eating a hearty meal of meat and olives, and was in a jocular frame of mind. What bin Laden had to say during the interview, however, was anything but a laughing matter. When Mir asked him how he could justify the killing of so many civilians, bin Laden replied, "America and its allies are massacring us in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Iraq. The Muslims have the right to attack America in reprisal ... The September eleven attacks were not targeted at women and children. The real targets were America's icons of military and economic power." In the interview bin Laden openly discussed his willingness to use nuclear weapons.

At about the same time, in the first week of November 2001, Amer Aziz, a prominent Pakistani surgeon, was summoned to Kabul to treat Muhammad Atef, who was then the military commander of al-Qaeda. During his visit Aziz, a Taliban sympathizer who had treated bin Laden in 1999 for a back injury, also met with bin Laden. The meeting is significant because there have been widespread but erroneous reports that bin Laden suffers from some form of deadly kidney disease. Aziz later told the Associated Press, "When I saw him last, he was in excellent health. He was walking. He was healthy. I didn't see any evidence of kidney disease. I didn't see any evidence of dialysis."

Khalid Khawaja, formerly an official in Pakistan's military-intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence, has known bin Laden since 1987, when the two fought side by side against the Soviets in Afghanistan. I met with



*Tora Bora,
December 2001:
the campaign
against al-Qaeda*

Khawaja, a heavily bearded man of fifty-three who speaks flawless English, at the offices of an Islamabad law firm, in a conference room lined with legal treatises. I asked him when he had last seen bin Laden, but he ducked the question. When I asked about the state of bin Laden's health, however, he said that he had received reliable reports since 9/11 that bin Laden was "riding horses"—a further indication that he isn't suffering from a serious illness.

According to several U.S. officials who track al-Qaeda, bin Laden's medical condition is not life-threatening. One told me he believes that bin Laden may be afflicted with



Marfan syndrome, a disease that attacks the connective tissues and is commonly found in very thin tall people. (Abraham Lincoln probably suffered from the syndrome.) Bin Laden does have a variety of ailments, including low blood pressure, diabetes, and a foot wound that he sustained while fighting in Afghanistan in the late 1980s; but although all these conditions are debilitating, none is likely to cause bin Laden's death anytime soon. Moreover, al-Zawahiri, who is likely to be with bin Laden most of the time, is a skilled doctor. A senior Afghan official told me that bin Laden and al-Zawahiri travel together "like a couple."

JAMES NACHTWEY/VII

On November 13, 2001, Kabul fell to the Northern Alliance, and bin Laden decamped to Jalalabad, in eastern Afghanistan. He knew the city well, having first settled there in May of 1996, after being expelled from his previous base, in Sudan. During the late 1990s bin Laden maintained a compound in Hadda, a suburb of Jalalabad, that consisted of dozens of rooms spread out over more than an acre. The compound sustained several direct hits during the Afghan war and is now a shell.

For some perspective on Jalalabad, I spoke with Dr. Muhammad Asif Qazizada, the deputy governor of Nan-

garhar, the province that contains Jalalabad. In his office, in a splendid blue-domed nineteenth-century building that was once the winter palace of Afghanistan's kings, Qazizada explained why Jalalabad and the nearby mountainous redoubt of Tora Bora were the perfect places for bin Laden to stage one of history's great disappearing acts. In his early twenties Qazizada worked as a medic in Tora Bora when it was an important base for the Afghan resistance to the Soviets. At the time, he recalled, Tora Bora was a warren of caves and fortifications defended by machine guns and anti-aircraft batteries. Because it offered easy access by foot to Parachinar, a region of Pakistan that juts like a parrot's beak into Afghanistan, it was also an ideal place from which to mount hit-and-run operations against the Soviets. Indeed, bin Laden fought his first battle against the Soviets, in 1987, at Jaji, an Afghan village that abuts Parachinar.

During the 1980s, Qazizada said, Tora Bora was the object of several Soviet offensives, one of them involving thousands of soldiers, dozens of helicopter gun ships, and several MiG fighter jets; so solid were the fortifications that the Soviet offensives were held off by a force of no more than 130 Afghans. For this reason, Qazizada believes, bin Laden chose the region as his hideout and escape route in November of 2001. When the two-week battle of Tora Bora took place shortly afterward, in December, it was

The idea that finding bin Laden wouldn't make much of a difference now is dangerously wrong: U.S. officials say he is personally directing a major terror plot against us.

fought largely by the forces of local Afghan commanders, supported by small numbers of U.S. Special Forces, who called in intense air strikes against al-Qaeda's positions. But Tora Bora's mountainous topography worked to bin Laden's advantage. "It was difficult for the Americans to attack," Qazizada says, "and there was a way to flee."

From Jalalabad, Tora Bora is a two-hour drive up a narrow, potholed country road. Protected by a squad of ten Afghan government soldiers, I was led there by Muhammad Zahir, a thirty-year-old Afghan commander. As we drove into the foothills, we saw beneath us terraced fields of the deepest green, rising toward towering mountains that are flecked with snow even in summer. On one of Tora Bora's many rocky outcrops we visited four al-Qaeda graves—marked by flying pennants of pink, green, blue, and orange. "The villagers made the shrine," Zahir explained. "They are al-Qaeda sympathizers. They think al-Qaeda are holy warriors, fighting against the infidels."

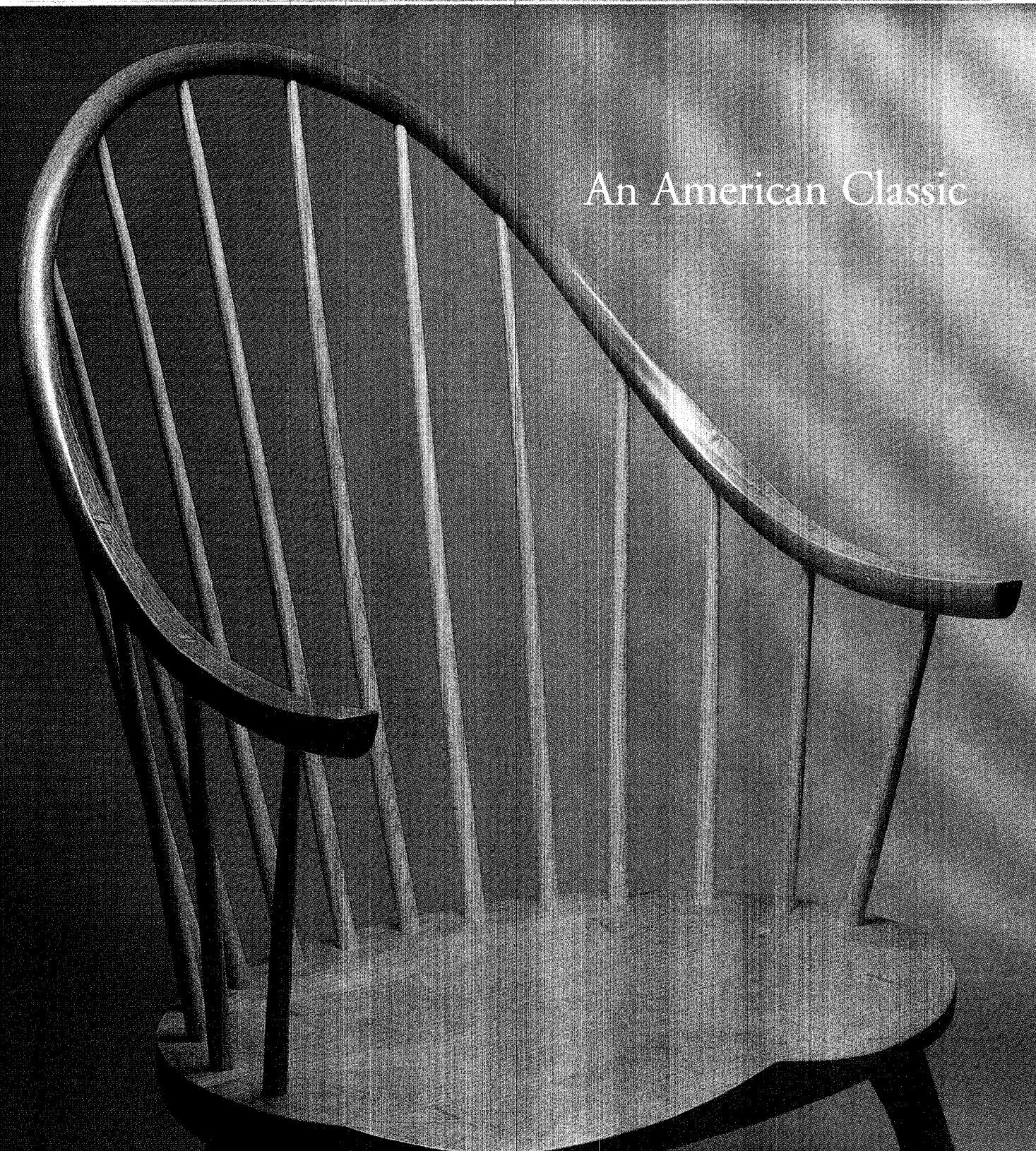
During lunch Zahir, who fought on the front lines throughout the 2001 battle of Tora Bora, explained how the conflict had unfolded. Al-Qaeda's bases had dotted the surrounding mountains, which were covered with snow during the battle. Zahir said that he had seen Arab, Pakistani, and Chechen members of al-Qaeda fighting with rockets, tanks, machine guns, and artillery—a formidable force that could be taken on only with the help of B-52 bombing raids on al-Qaeda's positions.

A turning point came on December 12, when Haji Zaman, one of the Afghan commanders leading the attack against al-Qaeda, opened negotiations with members of the group for a surrender agreement. "They talked on the radio with Haji Zaman," Zahir told me, "saying they were ready to surrender at two P.M. Commander Zaman told the other commanders and the Americans about this. Then al-Qaeda said, 'We need to have a meeting with our guys. Will you wait until eight A.M. tomorrow?' So we agreed to this. Those al-Qaeda who were not ready to be killed escaped that night. At eight A.M. the following day no one surrendered, so we started attacking again. Those people who chose to stay were serious fighters."

When I returned to Jalalabad, I spoke with Commander Muhammad Musa, who said he had led 600 Afghan soldiers on the Tora Bora front lines; with grudging admiration he recalled the tenacity with which some of al-Qaeda's fighters resisted to the end. "They fought very hard with us. When we captured them, they committed suicide with grenades. I saw three of them do that myself. The very hardest fighters were the Chechens." Musa praised the U.S. Air Force but was dismissive of American forces on the ground. "They were not involved in the fighting," he said. "There were six American soldiers with us, U.S. Special Forces. They coordinated the air strikes. My personal view is if they had blocked the way out to Pakistan, al-Qaeda would not have had a way to escape. The Americans were my guests here, but they didn't know about fighting."

And therein lies the crux of the problem. With only a small number of American "boots on the ground," the U.S. military chose to rely on the services of local Afghan proxies of uncertain loyalty and competence—a blunder that allowed many members of al-Qaeda, including Osama bin Laden himself, to slip away. The blunder meant that, as a senior U.S. military official told me, "we don't know for sure when bin Laden disappeared."

I got help with this question from Lutfullah Mashal, a senior official in Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior. Mashal told me, based on information he gleaned from radio intercepts, that "the Sheikh," as bin Laden is called by his supporters, departed Tora Bora in the first week of the American bombing campaign in that region, at the beginning of December 2001. According to Mashal, this information has been confirmed by Abu Jaffar, a Saudi financier who traveled to Afghanistan shortly before 9/11



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with \$3 million in charitable donations for al-Qaeda. Abu Jaffar, a fat middle-aged man with an amputated leg who described himself as an old friend of bin Laden's, told Mashal that once bin Laden had reached Jalalabad, he arranged for safe passage out of Afghanistan with the help of local tribal leaders.

Mashal told me that there were three routes out of Tora Bora. The young and the energetic took the difficult, snow-covered passes south toward Parachinar. Others took the road to the southeastern Afghan city of Gardez. Older fighters headed east into Pakistan. According to Mashal, bin Laden took the Parachinar route, aided by members of the Pashtun Chilzai tribe, who were paid handsomely in money and rifles for their efforts. And so was lost the last, best chance to capture al-Qaeda's leader, at a time when he was confined to an area of several dozen square miles. Bin Laden may now be somewhere in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province—and if so, the area involved is approximately 40,000 square miles, a largely mountainous tract the size of Virginia.

Despite the importance of finding al-Qaeda's leaders, by early 2002 the United States was already shifting its attention and resources away from Afghanistan. (That shift began early: according to Bob Woodward, in late November of 2001 President Bush had asked the Pentagon to revamp its Iraq war plan, an 800-page document known as Op Plan 1003.) For more than a year and a half the search for bin Laden was given relatively low priority. On February 24, 2002, General Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, "I wouldn't call [getting bin Laden] a prime mission." Intelligence and military assets that might have been directed at bin Laden were directed largely at Iraq. Only after the capture of Saddam Hussein, in December of 2003, were those resources redirected to the search for al-Qaeda's leaders. And according to CNN, not until this past spring were U.S. satellites ordered to survey the Afghan-Pakistani border region twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Although bin Laden was able to give U.S. forces the slip at Tora Bora, he did not make it through the battle without some personal cost. The Palestinian journalist Abdel Bari Atwan, who spent two days interviewing bin Laden in 1996 and has proved a consistently reliable source of information about al-Qaeda, told me that bin Laden was wounded in the shoulder during the Tora Bora battle. In late December of 2001 bin Laden released his last videotaped statement, which seems to confirm the existence of this injury. On the videotape bin Laden appears haggard, his beard streaked with white and the left side of his upper body immobilized, which is unusual; he tends to gesture with both hands when he is speaking. As if to underline his weakened physical state, bin Laden says on the videotape, "I am a poor slave of God. If I live or die the war will continue."

Since the appearance of that videotape, bin Laden and al-Zawahiri have released a dozen or so audiotapes—about one every three months since 9/11. Paul Eedle, an Arabic-speaking British journalist who closely monitors discussions on al-Qaeda Web sites, says the audiotapes are "enormously important," in that "they provide sustenance to discussions of al-Qaeda's planning." In a recent bin Laden tape, which surfaced in April, he vowed revenge for the assassination of Hamas's founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who had been killed by Israeli security forces three weeks earlier.

Why is it so hard to find Osama bin Laden? First, there is his obsession with security, which began in earnest not after 9/11 but a decade ago. In 1994, while bin Laden was living in Sudan, he was the target of a serious assassination attempt, possibly mounted by the Saudis, when a group of gunmen raked his Khartoum residence with machine-gun fire. After that attack bin Laden took much greater care of his security—an effort that was coordinated by Ali Mohamed, an Egyptian-American U.S. Army sergeant who during the late 1980s had worked as an instructor at U.S. Special Forces headquarters, at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina.

In 1997, when I was a producer for CNN, I met with bin Laden in eastern Afghanistan to film his first-ever television interview, and thus witnessed the extraordinary lengths to which members of al-Qaeda went to protect their leader. My colleagues and I were taken to bin Laden's hideout in the

At Tora Bora, bin Laden was confined to several dozen square miles. If he is now in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, the area involved is the size of Virginia.

middle of the night; we were made to change vehicles while blindfolded; we were aggressively searched and electronically swept for tracking devices; and we had to pass through three successive groups of guards armed with submachine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

As has often been observed, the leadership of al-Qaeda is highly secretive, running the organization in a compartmentalized manner, which makes it hard to penetrate—and also ensures that any operative who may be captured will know only a portion of the group's secrets. An illustration of this is the limited number of al-Qaeda leaders who knew of the 9/11 plot. In a videotape discovered by U.S. forces in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, bin Laden is seen gesturing at Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, then the

group's spokesman, and observing that not even Abu Ghaith was clued in on 9/11. And it's worth recalling that bin Laden and al-Zawahiri have spent their entire adult lives in organizations that prize discipline and secrecy. Al-Zawahiri joined a *jihadist* cell in Egypt when he was only fifteen; bin Laden became involved in clandestine efforts against the Soviets in Afghanistan when he was in his early twenties.

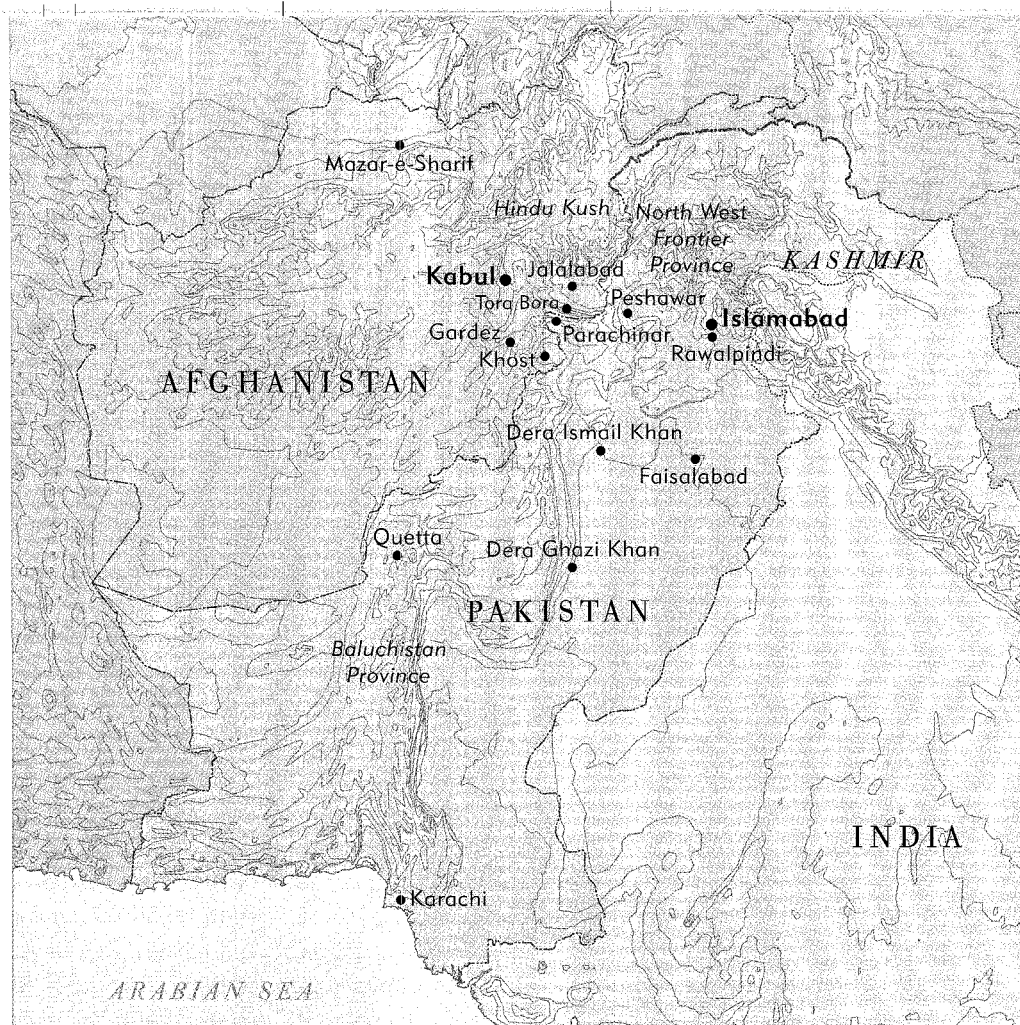
The situation is further complicated if bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are indeed hiding out in the tribal areas of Pakistan on the Afghan border—"the most concentrated al-Qaeda area on the planet," one American intelligence official told me. The Pakistan-Afghan border stretches 1,500 miles—roughly the distance from Washington, D.C., to Denver. It is lightly guarded and even undefined in some places; clandestine travel in the region is therefore relatively easy. The two Pakistani provinces that abut Afghanistan are Baluchistan, a vast, inhospitable expanse of broiling deserts, and the North West Frontier Province, a flinty, mountainous region punctuated by the fortresses of tribal chiefs. Pashtun tribes, who constitute one of the largest tribal groups in the world, are a major presence in both provinces. They subscribe to Pashtunwali, the law of the Pashtuns, which places an enormous premium on hospitality and on the giving of refuge to anybody who seeks it—an obvious boon to fugitive members of al-Qaeda.

But there's a problem with hiding somewhere along the Afghanistan-Pakistan frontier, according to Rahimullah Yusufzai, a prominent Pashtun journalist. "Everybody knows everybody there," he told me. "If someone comes there who is from a different tribe, they stick out. It's difficult for Arabs to hide in tribal areas." If bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are indeed in Baluchistan or the North West Frontier, therefore, they may be hiding outside the remote tribal belt, in a city such as Peshawar or Quetta, or in a town such as Kohat or Dera Ismail Khan.

A further possibility, which to date has received scant attention, is that bin Laden is somewhere in the mountains of Pakistani Kashmir—an area that is off limits to outsiders and home to numerous Kashmiri militant groups, some of which are deeply intertwined with al-Qaeda. Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM), for instance,

shared training camps in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda in the late 1990s. An offshoot of HUM, Jaish-e-Muhammad, orchestrated the kidnapping-murder of the American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002, an operation run in conjunction with al-Qaeda. U.S. officials believe that Jaish-e-Muhammad received funding from bin Laden. The multiple relationships between those groups and al-Qaeda—what one U.S. official in the region described to me as "overlapping networks of nasty people"—make the groups obvious potential allies in the effort to hide bin Laden and al-Zawahiri. According to Pakistani terrorism analysts, several of the most militant Pakistani groups have recently gathered under an umbrella organization called Brigade 313, named for the number of men who stood with the Prophet Muhammad at the key battle of Badr, in the seventh century. Also, the Kashmiri militant groups are genuinely popular in Pakistan. Until January of 2002, when it was officially banned, Lashkar-e-Taiba maintained 2,200 offices around the country and attracted hundreds of thousands of followers to its annual gatherings. Technically Lashkar no longer exists, but it continues to operate, under a different name and with a lower profile, and its leader, Hafiz Saeed, continues to address rallies in Pakistan.

Further complicating the picture, the Pakistani government has long had a close relationship with the Kash-



miri groups because they share the goal of expelling Indian forces from the Kashmir region. Bin Laden understands that Kashmir is Pakistan's "blind spot," a senior U.S. military-intelligence official told me. Musharraf's government has cracked down on Kashmiri militants since 9/11, but the intensity of the crackdown has ebbed and flowed. For instance, Maulana Masood Azhar, the leader of the Jaish terror group, is not under house arrest and, according to a U.S. official, has "good relations with [Pakistan's] spooks." An official in Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry concurs: "The leadership and brains of al-Qaeda are not in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The question is, Who is in Kashmir?"

To the extent that al-Qaeda has set up a new base of operations, it is neither in Afghanistan nor along the Afghan-Pakistani border but in the anonymity of Pakistan's teeming cities. As Lieutenant General Assad Durrani, the former head of Pakistan's ISI, explained to me, "Cities offer the best refuge. In the countryside information gets leaked out more easily." Since 9/11 none of the key captured al-Qaeda operatives have been found in Pakistan's tribal areas; instead they have been run to ground in the cities of Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Faisalabad, Gujrat, and Rawalpindi. Those arrested include Ramzi bin al-Shibh, who was critical to the planning of 9/11; Abu Zubaydah, who recruited for al-Qaeda; Walid bin Attash, who played an important role in the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen; Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, who is one of the conspirators in the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi, who bankrolled the 9/11 hijackers; and, most important, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, the military commander of al-Qaeda, who had overall responsibility for planning the 9/11 attacks. Khalid Sheikh Muhammad was arrested in Rawalpindi, which happens to be home to the headquarters of Pakistan's army. One Western diplomat in the region asked me, "What the fuck was this guy doing just down the road from GHQ [Army headquarters]?"

In particular Karachi, a barely governable megacity of 14 million people, has emerged as a locus of *jihadist* violence perpetrated by a toxic alliance of the Kashmiri militant groups, Sunni sectarian fanatics who have launched a war on Pakistan's minority Shia, and al-Qaeda itself. Since 9/11 Karachi has experienced the bombing of a Sheraton hotel, which killed eleven French defense contractors; two separate attacks on the U.S. consulate, one of which killed a dozen Pakistanis; multiple bombings of Shell gas stations; and the murder of Daniel Pearl. In May alone militants killed sixty-three people in the city.

Al-Qaeda's active presence in Pakistan raises an important question: How reliable is the Pakistani government in the effort to hunt down the terrorist group? U.S. sources say that certain elements in the ISI may retain some ideological

sympathy for the Taliban. However, the consistent record of high-profile al-Qaeda arrests in Pakistan indicates that the Pakistanis are doing a reasonably diligent job. According to Major General Shaukat Sultan Khan, the spokesman for the ISI, Pakistan has arrested 500 "foreign fighters" since 9/11. Moreover, after the assassination attempts against him Musharraf is personally determined to destroy al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, lower-level members of the military were involved in the planning of those assassination attempts: up to four members of the army and six members of the air force, according to Khan.

The capture of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, in March of 2003, was the most important al-Qaeda arrest since 9/11. However, according to Syed Mohsin Naqvi, a Pakistani journalist who interviewed Muhammad while he was on the run in August of 2002, Muhammad claimed that others were ready to replace him in the event he was arrested. "We already have so many backups," he said, "that the Americans can't imagine."

Muhammad's arrest may have brought investigators tantalizingly close to bin Laden himself. According to American sources, when Muhammad was arrested he may have been tortured, a not uncommon technique of Pakistani law enforcement. That may explain why he quickly volunteered that he had met with bin Laden in December of 2002. Although Muhammad would not reveal where the meeting took place, it was probably in Pakistan. After Muhammad's capture there was a brief flurry of anticipa-

Reports that bin Laden has a deadly kidney disease are erroneous. A Pakistani surgeon who met with him after 9/11 found him to be "healthy," without "any evidence of dialysis."

tion that bin Laden himself would soon be arrested, but now, according to one U.S. official, bin Laden's "personal signature trail is cold."

A few months after the apprehension of Muhammad, I talked with Cofer Black, the former head of the CIA's Counterterrorist Center, who has something of a personal interest in tracking down bin Laden. In his spacious office at the State Department, where he is now serving as ambassador for counterterrorism, Black told me that while he was the CIA station chief in Sudan, during the mid-1990s, al-Qaeda tried to assassinate him. He handled the episode with admirable sangfroid, deciding to consider the attempt an exercise to "see how they [al-Qaeda] were conducting themselves." After 9/11, Black famously told President Bush that his operatives would bring Bush bin Laden's head "in

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a box.” (A member of Black’s staff told me that when his words came out in the press, Black said with a deadpan look, “Well, we will need some DNA.”)

Black began our conversation by observing that the war on terrorism is far larger than the hunt for bin Laden. “You can’t stop crime just by catching Al Capone,” he said, going on to stress that he was not personally obsessed with getting bin Laden: “This is no Ahab and Moby Dick kind of deal.” Bin Laden “is on the run, he is very defensive, spending a lot of time worrying about security,” Black continued. “How effective can you be?” To avoid being captured bin Laden has to adopt a “hermit on the hilltop” approach, Black said, which destroys his ability to run an effective terrorist organization. On the other hand, if he remains “in business,” he opens himself to the possibility that his communications will be detected. I suggested that bin Laden seems to be caught between a rock and a hard place, and Black leaned toward me, smiling broadly, and said, “You got it.”

This past January, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Hilferty, the senior spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, announced, “We’re sure we’re going to catch Osama bin Laden and [the former Taliban leader] Mullah Omar this year.” His prediction came at about the same time that the U.S. and Pakistani governments announced a plan to conduct more-intensive operations to find bin Laden. The joint “hammer-and-anvil” strategy involved Pakistan’s moving 70,000 soldiers into the tribal regions to flush out al-Qaeda forces, which would then, at least theoretically, flee across the border into the arms of U.S. forces waiting for them on the Afghan side. But the plan was trumpeted at every turn—and as a result, any al-Qaeda member with an ounce of common sense very probably left the tribal areas earlier this year. “Al-Qaeda are not so foolish that they would be sitting waiting there for a year for the Pakistan army,” Syed Mohsin Naqvi told me.

In late July, I met with Lieutenant General David Barno, the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, at a Pakistani air-force base near Islamabad, after Barno had completed one of his regular meetings with his Pakistani counterparts to coordinate efforts along the Afghan-Pakistani border. Of bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, Barno said, “Their location remains a mystery.” But he added, “More resources are on that today.” He then described an important problem confronting the United States in Afghanistan—the \$2.3 billion heroin trade. Barno said that drug money accounts for more than 40 percent of the Afghan economy—a figure that could rise above 50 percent next year. The possibility that Afghanistan could emerge as a Colombia-style narcostate, dominated by competing warlords and drug cartels, is what Afghanistan’s Foreign Minister, Abdullah Abdullah, described to me as “the biggest danger and threat to stability.”

Iran is another area of concern. Since early last year a

number of important al-Qaeda operatives have shown up in Iran, a country that, according to one U.S. intelligence official, some in al-Qaeda envisaged as “an administrative hub” for the group. U.S. officials told me that Saif al-Adel, the No. 3 man in al-Qaeda’s hierarchy; Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, the group’s spokesman; Muhammad al-Masri, an important al-Qaeda trainer; and Abu al-Khayr, one of al-Zawahiri’s deputies, have all been apprehended by the Iranian authorities. What the Iranians plan to do with their prisoners is something of a mystery. “We wish we could predict how this is going to turn out,” one U.S. official says.

Given that al-Qaeda is highly secretive, compartmentalized, and security conscious, what strategies might work to flush out bin Laden? Will the \$50 million bounty on his head work? In the past cash rewards have been useful in bringing terrorists to justice. Mir Aimal Kansi, a Pakistani who killed two CIA employees outside the Agency’s headquarters in Virginia in 1993, was apprehended in part because of the \$2 million reward offered. A \$25 million reward played a role in the apprehension of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad. However, these men did not inspire the spiritual awe that Osama bin Laden does. That bin Laden’s inner circle would turn him over for money is unthinkable. Bin Laden has had a multi-million-dollar bounty on his head since as far back as 1999, but there have been no takers.

In Washington I met one of the FBI’s most effective investigators, Special Agent Brad Garrett, who ran Mir Aimal Kansi to ground in Pakistan in 1997. I asked Garrett, a former Marine who habitually dresses entirely in black, what methods had worked to find Kansi, and how they might be applicable in the hunt for bin Laden. “The key is developing sources,” Garrett said. “You have to sort out what is BS from what is the truth, and develop multiple sources to see what is real. You hope to get an associate to give up real-time information about the fugitive. The intelligence is very perishable, so another factor is one’s ability to react to it in a timely fashion.”

Garrett encountered many dry holes in his four-year hunt for Kansi, finally tracking him down in the dusty backwater of Dera Ghazi Khan, in central Pakistan, which “felt like it was out of *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.” Garrett explained that although Kansi was helped by a loose network of people who “respected” him for his attack outside CIA headquarters, he did not have an organization he could rely on, as bin Laden does. In short, Kansi was more vulnerable to detection than the terrorist mastermind, because he was essentially a lone wolf.

It’s possible, but not likely, that signal intelligence, known as “sigint,” could be bin Laden’s undoing. Sigint was critical in the case of the Colombian drug kingpin Pablo Escobar, the subject of a huge manhunt by the Colombian police in his native city of Medellín in 1993.

The operation used CIA eavesdropping and direction-finding technology. When Escobar made a cell-phone call to his son that lasted longer than a few minutes, Colombian forces swarmed his neighborhood and shot him dead. But bin Laden is savvier than Escobar; a U.S. official told me that he “has quit any kind of device that can be listened to.” That includes satellite phones, cell phones, and hand-held radios. When communication is absolutely necessary, he relies on couriers.

Information obtained from al-Qaeda detainees has proved important in the hunt for the group’s leaders, as have the cell-phone numbers, documents, and computers recovered when al-Qaeda members are captured. U.S. intelligence services have apparently failed, however, to insert agents in al-Qaeda’s inner circle—the only sure-fire way to get real-time intelligence about bin Laden’s whereabouts. Colonel Patrick Lang, a fluent Arabic-speaker who ran Middle Eastern “humint” (human intelligence) for the Defense Intelligence Agency in the early 1990s, told me that the lack of humint remains a problem. “Everybody talks about effective humint,” he said, “but nothing is happening. The people who do this kind of work are gifted eccentrics, who the bureaucrats don’t like, or they are the criminal types, who the lawyers don’t like. If only we were the ruthless bastards everyone thinks we are.” According to the Pakistani terrorism analyst Amir Mir, however, the past year or so has produced one promising humint development: FBI officials have created what is known as the Spider Group—an elite team of retired Pakistani army and intelligence officers who are gathering information about the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

No matter how many resources are directed at the hunt for bin Laden, it is complicated by what one could call “the problem of finding one person.” Criminals often stay on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list for years. Eric Rudolph, the alleged bomber of Atlanta’s Centennial Park during the 1996 Olympics, eluded the police during the most intense manhunt in FBI history and was caught only last year, in the small town of Murphy, North Carolina, when an alert rookie cop spotted him and took him in for questioning.

The problem of finding one person becomes more pronounced once the hunt is extended overseas, of course. For almost a decade the United States and its NATO allies have searched the former Yugoslavia for Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, both alleged to have played a key role in the genocide of Bosnian Muslims during the early 1990s. “The last time we got a sniff of Karadzic,” a U.S. military official told me, “was in 1997.” During Operation Restore Hope, a 1993 humanitarian mission to feed starving Somalis, the United States had some 20,000 soldiers stationed in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, hunting for Muhammad Aideded, a warlord who was fomenting factional strife in Somalia. Aideded was never captured.

Of course, the capture of Saddam Hussein is an example of a successful U.S. operation against a high-value target. However, the search for Saddam played out against a different backdrop: the United States has some 140,000 soldiers in Iraq; it has only 20,000 in Afghanistan, a much larger country. And in Pakistan, where bin Laden is most probably hiding, the United States has only a smattering of CIA and FBI officials hunting for members of al-Qaeda, and must rely on the Pakistani army for search operations. Moreover, once Saddam’s reign of fear collapsed, there were relatively few Saddam loyalists; in contrast, “love” is not too strong a word for the feelings of those who surround bin Laden. The former senior U.S. counterterrorism official Roger Cressey told me that an al-Qaeda operative betraying bin Laden would be like “a Catholic giving up the Pope.”

If cash rewards, electronic intercepts, and moles within al-Qaeda are unlikely to yield leads in the search for bin Laden, then what might work, other than dumb luck? An obvious vulnerability is the audiotapes that bin Laden and al-Zawahiri periodically release to media outlets; theoretic-

Cofer Black, formerly of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center, has promised to bring back bin Laden’s head “in a box,” but he says he’s not obsessed: “This is no Ahab and Moby Dick kind of deal.”

cally, the custody chain of these tapes could be traced back to al-Qaeda’s leaders. Another possible vulnerability is bin Laden’s family. He is the only son of his Syrian mother, to whom he is extremely close and who visited Afghanistan in early 2001 to attend the wedding of one of her grandsons. She apparently splits her time between Saudi Arabia and the resort town of Latakia, Syria, and is presumably of considerable interest to investigative agencies.

Bin Laden also has a family of four wives and some twenty children, who cannot all have simply vanished into thin air. Although some of his children are living openly in Saudi Arabia, others are quite possibly somewhere in Afghanistan, probably under the protection of key Taliban commanders close to bin Laden. The person protecting bin Laden’s family may be Jalaluddin Haqqani, a formidable Taliban commander who continues to attack American forces in eastern Afghanistan. Haqqani may be a key to finding bin Laden.

One of the most effective Afghan commanders against the Soviets, Haqqani was close to the Arab militants who were drawn to the Afghan *jihad*. He is married to an Arab, speaks fluent Arabic, and received substantial funding from

sources in the Gulf during the early 1980s, which he used to set up an impressive base in the Khost area of eastern Afghanistan. After 9/11 Haqqani was tapped to become the Taliban's military commander. Lutfullah Mashal, of the Afghan Interior Ministry, told me that it was Haqqani who saved bin Laden after the fall of the Taliban, affording him refuge in Khost not long after the terrorist leader had slipped out of Tora Bora. According to Mashal, Haqqani is now based in Pakistan, in the wild tribal area of Waziristan, traveling back and forth more or less at will. According to Afghan and American officials, he remains an important point of contact for al-Qaeda's leaders.

Another veteran commander of the Afghan war against the Soviets who is close to bin Laden and therefore merits further investigation is Younis Khalis. When bin Laden settled in Jalalabad, in May of 1996, he was welcomed not by the Taliban, who as yet did not control Jalalabad, but by Khalis. Khalis has repeatedly declared a *jihad* against U.S. forces in Afghanistan, most recently this past summer.

Locating bin Laden's old friend Mullah Omar might of course also yield clues to the al-Qaeda leader's whereabouts—but according to Rahimullah Yusufzai, the prominent Pashtun journalist, who has interviewed Mullah Omar on several occasions since the mid-1990s, the number of people who would know where Omar can be found is tiny, and is confined to the Taliban's top leadership. "Eight or nine people would know," he told me.

The lack of human intelligence remains a major problem. "Nothing is happening," says one former official. "If only we were the ruthless bastards everyone thinks we are."

Robert Baer, a former CIA operative based in the Middle East, argues that only a proactive approach to finding bin Laden will work. "It's never easy to find a single person," he told me, "but if you are operating on the ground, you go for the assassination and you find a group of people who will do this and benefit." The problem is, who would be foolhardy enough to take on the risky job of assassinating al-Qaeda's leaders?

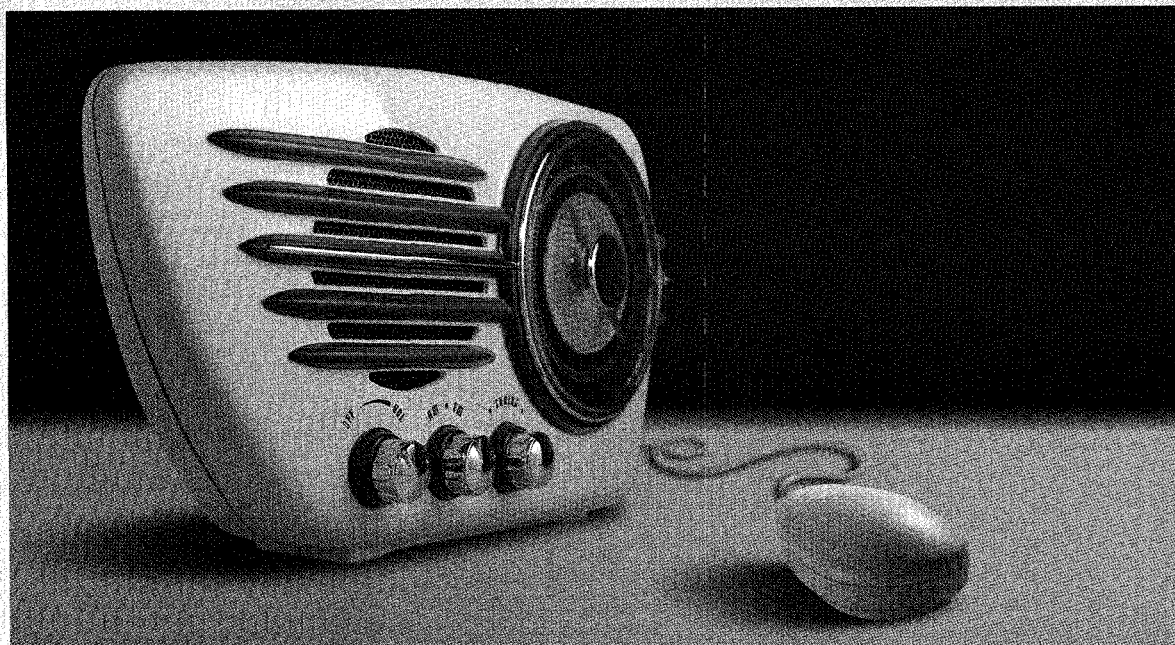
Bounty hunters might. While I was staying in Kabul this summer, the bizarre tale of Jonathan "Jack" Idema, a former Green Beret, came to light. According to Afghan officials, Idema, who has a rich history of fraud, misrepresentation, and litigiousness in the United States, set up a private prison in the capital in an effort to run his own investigation into al-Qaeda. He developed a reputation in Kabul as a Special Forces-wannabe who drove around in

an SUV, weapon at the ready, and a blowhard who hung out at the Mustafa Hotel, a seedy joint where like-minded war junkies came to swap tall tales over endless beers.

Idema and two American sidekicks, Brent Bennett and a cameraman named Edward Caraballo, rented a house near the Intercontinental Hotel. They told neighbors that they were running a company, Universal Exports, that dealt in Afghan rugs. After receiving multiple complaints of unexplained disappearances of Kabul residents, the Afghan authorities raided the house, where they found eight prisoners, some hanging by their feet from the ceiling. Idema had made his "arrests" based largely on people's appearance, particularly targeting men with long beards—hardly an uncommon trait in Kabul. According to Afghan officials, Idema and his colleagues interrogated and beat some of their prisoners to get them to confess they were members of al-Qaeda. Idema has said in his defense that he was acting with the knowledge of the Pentagon and of Afghan officials—claims that have been firmly denied by both parties.

Osama bin Laden may eventually be apprehended, or he may eventually be killed. A U.S. intelligence official told me that little thought has been given in Washington to what happens next. Which outcome is more desirable? What are the implications of either of those outcomes? If bin Laden is captured alive, for instance, where should he be put on trial? A case could be made that he be tried by an international tribunal, similar to those set up for crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. And a useful precedent exists for handling a captured bin Laden: the pictures beamed around the world after Saddam Hussein's capture, of Saddam submitting to a doctor's probings, did more than anything else to puncture the Iraqi dictator's mystique. Similar pictures would do much to deflate bin Laden's mythic persona.

Of course, on several occasions bin Laden has said that he's prepared to die in his holy war—a statement that should be taken at face value. Khalid Khawaja, the former Pakistani military-intelligence official who has known bin Laden for almost two decades, told me, "He will never be captured. He's not Saddam Hussein. He's Osama. Osama loves death." In the short term bin Laden's death would probably trigger violent anti-American attacks around the globe. In the medium term it would be a serious blow to al-Qaeda, which depends to a critical degree on the charisma of its leader. But in the long term bin Laden's "martyrdom" would most likely give an enormous boost to the power of his ideas. Sayyid Qutb, generally regarded as the Lenin of the *jihadist* movement, was a relatively obscure writer before the Egyptian government executed him, in 1966. After his death his writings, which called for offensive holy wars against the enemies of Islam, became enormously influential. The same thing would happen after bin Laden's death, but to an infinitely greater degree. ▀



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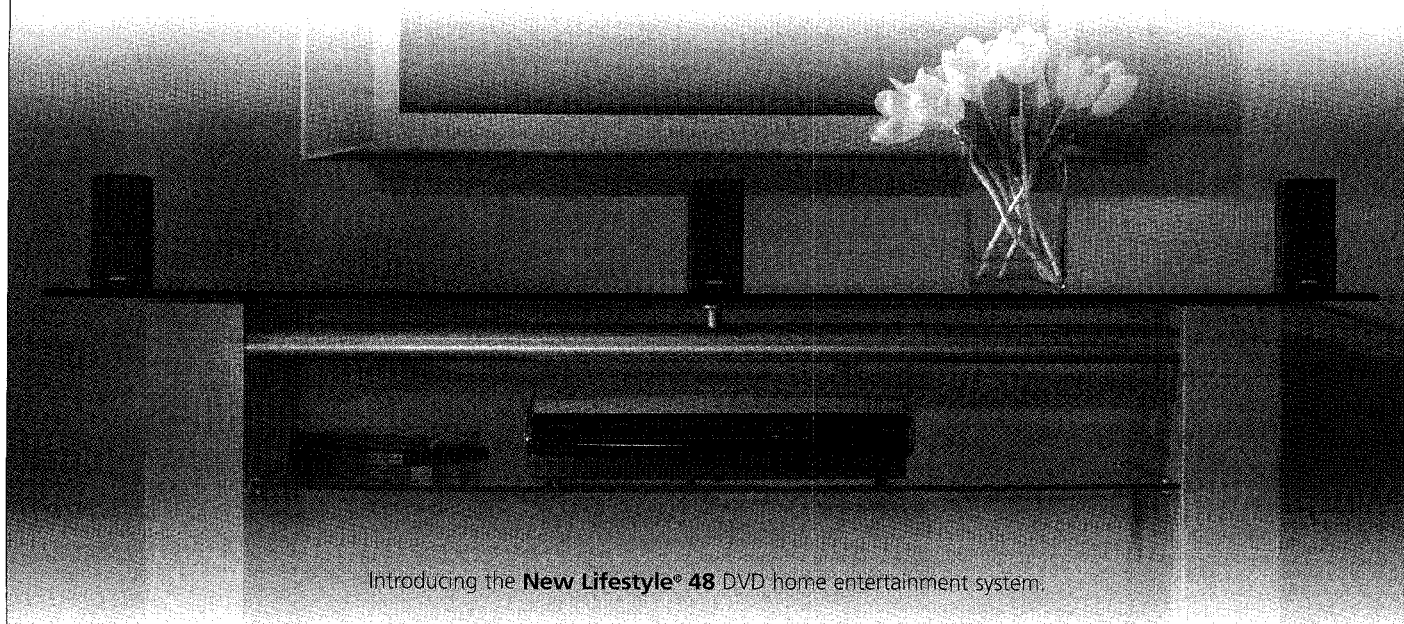
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IF MEMORY DOESN'T SERVE

*Sarah Jessica Parker or Sarah Michelle Gellar? Ashanti or Beyoncé?
All will come clear on the Day of Reckoning*

BY IAN FRAZIER

Illustration by John Cuneo

.....

Among the cruelest tricks life plays is the way it puts the complicated part at the end, when the brain is declining into simplicity, and the simple part at the beginning, when the brain is fresh and has memory power to spare. As a boy I had only a few things to keep track of. There was one place, the small town where I lived; two pro sports, baseball and football; three TV channels; four sequential seasons, as yet unmixed by global warming; five kids in my neighborhood to play with; and so on. In no category did the number of entries go much above a dozen or two. I didn't meet people and have to remember their names, because everybody I ran into I already knew. With my extra, leftover memory I preserved pointless conversations, nonsense phrases my brother made up, remarks by adults they later claimed they hadn't said, and incidental data such as the farthest point up our street from which it was possible to run and still catch the school bus.

Since then my memory has been required to hold gigantically much more, the bulk of it so dull. Feats of adult remembering often conform to the "negative Disneyland" rule of grown-up pleasures: that is, it is fun, of a sort, suddenly to remember where you left the registration stickers for your car, but only in comparison to the trip to the Department of Motor Vehicles you would have to make if you didn't. I sometimes nearly crumble in self-pity at the mnemonic brain-busters life hands me. An example: A few years ago the friends my young son usually played with were Joshua, Rhys, and Julian. No memory problems there—each interesting and lively boy easily matched with his name in my mind. The mothers of the boys, however, were (respectively) Georgeanne, Geraldine, and Gabrielle. To a person whose days of high-detail remembering are gone, those are essentially the same name. When greeting someone, it is not enough to know that her name begins with a G. I held this unfair complicatedness against each of them and acted put-upon and odd around them.

Does anyone remember the name of Russ Nixon, catcher for the Cleveland Indians in 1958?

*Ian Frazier is the author of *On the Rez* (2000) and *Nobody Better, Better Than Nobody*, recently published in paperback.*

Once I spent lonely hours trying to remember it, and when morning came and I could call a friend who knew, I understood what had happened. My friend spoke and the name emerged, good as new, from the later Nixon overlays that had hidden it. The brain has only so many slots, and by the time you reach fifty they have become cluttered and full. I'm sure most of us have a small place in our brains containing the following four items:

1. H. G. Wells
2. George Orwell
3. Orson Welles
4. Orson Bean

They cluster together through some unknown law of the synapses. The first two are easy to confuse because both are thirties-era, English, and science-fictiony (*The Time Machine*, *Nineteen Eighty-four*). The second and third blend because George Orwell and Orson Welles, as names, sound like made-up, roman-à-clef versions of each other. Also, Welles did a famous hoax radio broadcast of Wells's *War of the Worlds*, a confusing event in itself. And then you have Orson Bean, who is in there probably just to round out the conjugation, or through one of those comic mishaps he used to get into in his roles as an actor. Sometimes when I have a spare moment I take each name out, consider it, link it to the proper person, recall each one's face and biography, and then put all the names back in place in my mind. I believe this is a basically healthy exercise, like flossing.

Then, if I'm feeling like it, or if I'm still lying awake, I run through a few more calisthenics to keep myself sharp. AA is not the same as Triple A—a fact I learn and relearn at car-rental counters when I ask for an AA discount. Michael Moore, the activist author and documentary filmmaker, once made a movie called *Roger and Me*, partly about Roger Smith, then the president of General Motors. Consequently, it is quite natural to slip up and refer to Michael Moore as Roger Moore. The two are different, however; Roger Moore is a suave-seeming English movie actor who used to play James



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Bond, a couple of James Bonds ago. And speaking of that, I am me, and not James Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, the late English intelligence officer and author of spy thrillers. Twice now while I've been on book tours the person introducing me to the audience at a reading has said, "And now, please join me in welcoming Ian Fleming." After the second time I took to carrying a copy of *Goldfinger*, just to be ready, but so far it hasn't happened again.

Jamie Bassett was my son's third-grade teacher; Diana Tackett was my daughter's second-grade teacher. Kathy York was my daughter's third-grade teacher; Drury Thorp was my son's second-grade teacher. (Drury Thorp is related to the humorist Robert Benchley, who still has his own slot in my mind.) Ashanti is not the same as Beyoncé; the former is a popular singer who recently appeared on the cover of a New York newspaper carrying a handbag printed with a greatly enlarged photograph of her own face; the latter is a popular singer who has won several Grammy Awards and who performed the national anthem at the most recent Super Bowl—the Janet Jackson one. Russell Means and Dennis Banks were both leaders of the American Indian Movement back in the seventies; I am prone to refer to either or both as Russell Banks, who is neither, but a well-known novelist. Victor Klemperer, the German writer, kept a detailed two-volume journal of his days in Berlin during World War II, and has been called "the great diarist of the Holocaust"; Werner Klemperer is the American television and movie actor who played Colonel Klink on the TV series *Hogan's Heroes*. (Remarkably, Werner and Victor were cousins.)

I sometimes nearly crumble in self-pity at the mnemonic brain-busters life hands me.

Suddenly a nagging thought occurs to me: There is Ashanti, and there is Beyoncé ... but wasn't there a third in that category? Yes. There was another like them—another young, model-beautiful black woman singer usually referred to by a single name. She has recently disappeared over the music-scene horizon. Her big hit song was "The Boy Is Mine." She sang it as a duet with somebody. I saw the video of it many times. In it she did a lot of vogueing, hand gestures, framing her face with her fingers, and so forth. I used to do a lip-synch imitation of her, using the same gestures but ending with one of my own, which was to lift my baseball cap above my head twice with both hands. I showed my imitation often to my teenage daughter and her friends, embarrassing her. What was that singer's name? It was ... Brandy! Thank you, memory. Ashanti, Beyoncé, and Brandy.

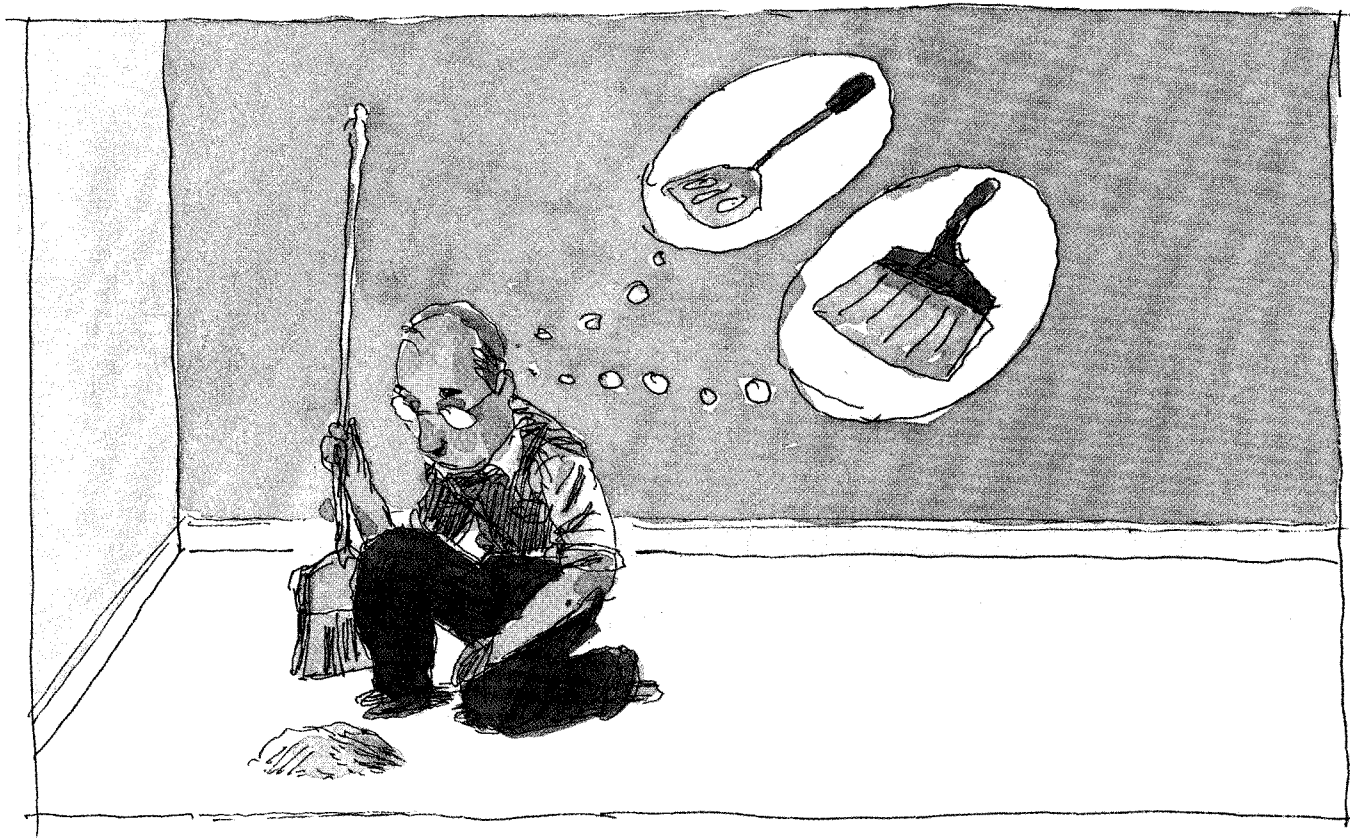
Jamie Bassett, Diana Tackett; Drury Thorp, Kathy York. The names of elementary school teachers have a strange

power to evoke the past. Ashanti, Beyoncé, Brandy. I am slightly afraid there's yet another in that category I've forgotten about, but I won't worry over it now. Russell Means (AIM), Russell Banks (novelist), Dennis Banks (AIM). Victor Klemperer, diarist of the Holocaust; Werner Klemperer, actor who played Colonel Klink. When I have all the names straight, maybe I will get to sleep.

F Scott Fitzgerald, whom I confuse with nobody, once said that the measure of a first-rate intellect is its ability to hold two contradictory ideas at the same time. I believe this may be one of those profound sayings that fall apart if you examine them closely. Holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously is a stunt that millions of minds pull off every day. A fifth of the people on the planet believe that their spouse is both the most wonderful person alive and the biggest disaster that ever happened to them; many of the inhabitants, sophisticated or not, of New York and Los Angeles will affirm in a single conversation that theirs is both the best and the worst city in the world. In fact, holding contradictory ideas simultaneously is a snap, because they are so distinct, and thus unlikely to interpenetrate dizzily with each other and swap themselves around.

A better gauge of mental subtlety, it seems to me, is whether you can retain ideas that are very similar but also different. For example, can you simultaneously think of, while noting the differences between, the dancer/actresses Rita Moreno and Chita Rivera? If you can accomplish that, try upping the ante by adding the actresses Carmen Miranda and Ida Lupino. Now see if you can hold all four in your mind simultaneously. The world of TV and movies offers many such tests. It takes all my mind's agility to hold at once the actresses Sarah Jessica Parker and Jennifer Aniston. The first step is not to think about Sarah Michelle Gellar or Sally Jessy Raphael, because that will only confuse things. Sarah Jessica Parker and Jennifer Aniston are both young, blond, beautiful, and wisecracking but vulnerable. Both were in successful TV series that just ended. The first is married to Matthew Broderick, the second to Brad Pitt. Sarah has wavy hair; Jennifer's is straight. Thinking of one somehow makes it almost impossible to think of the other. Both are in the news a lot, which allows more chances to practice.

Then there are Charles Durning and Brian Dennehy (Wilford Brimley being the confusing third in that category); Fernando Lamas and Ricardo Montalban (José Ferrer, ditto); Norman Fell and Jack Klugman; Van Heflin and Red Buttons; Swoosie Kurtz and Stockard Channing; Wally Cox and Don Knotts ... My only advice about untangling the whole Lee Majors/William Shatner/Chad Everett/Robert Wagner/Robert Conrad/William Conrad nexus is: Don't go there. As actors from old TV series recede in time, memory conflates them into a single ur-TV star. Recently I've found that even the movie stars Robert De Niro



and Al Pacino are starting to blur together in my mind.

The other day, while cleaning the house, I pointed to the dustpan in the corner of the living room and asked my daughter, “Could you please bring me the spatula?” She asked, “You mean the dustpan?” I replied—taking a page from her book—“Whatever.” A dustpan and a spatula really are a lot alike. Why use a separate word for each object? “Dustpan” is drab and colorless, whereas “spatula” is a poetic-sounding creation that just rolls off the tongue. Also, “spatula” has a venerable history as a comic keyword, like “rutabaga” and “Buick” and “schnauzer.” So why not call both objects “spatula”? That’s the decision I’ve made. “Spatula” might not be quite accurate when applied to a dustpan, but for most practical purposes it’s close enough. As you get older, you don’t want to waste time on tiny details.

On the other hand, you don’t want to become so carried away with “spatula” that you repeat it over and over to yourself as you lie in bed late at night. It’s a perfect example of the kind of word that, if repeated often enough, will make you insane.

If despair is a sin (and it is—it’s an aspect of the deadly sin of sloth), the virtuous person must resist it, and all tendencies likely to lead to it. Torturing the mind with minutiae is one of those. Originally, I seem to recall, America took pride in its plainspoken rejection of all the pomp and foofaraw of corrupt, overcomplicated Europe. Now America is complication itself. Look down the table at the public library where people plug in their laptops, and see the heaped-up entanglements of cables and wires. Try to read the pamphlet in six-point type that your new phone carrier sends you when you

change long-distance service. Go to the supermarket to buy an ordinary item for your spouse. The other day at the A&P I noticed a man lost in thought in front of a bank of different kinds of brownie mix. Then he took out his cell phone and made a call: “Hi, babe ... You wanted Triple Chunk? Okay ... I thought you said Triple *Fudge* Chunk.” At some point the brain, in order to avoid despair, begins to shut down.

My son, who is eleven, has a memory like wet cement. Occurrences leave impressions on it and are there to stay—clear, manifest, close at hand. Like apparently all children today, he has an effortless affinity with gadgetry that exhausts me just to look at it. I call him when I want some advanced appliance turned off or on. Even more useful is his ability to replay data he has observed. Ask him what we were talking about before we started talking about what we’re talking about now, and he knows. He always retrieves the thread of a conversation in a manner that’s matter-of-fact or bored.

For me, however, the feeling at these moments is a vast and happy relief. When you’ve been trying to remember something and you suddenly remember it, the mental pleasure is keen. Not remembering eats at you, but remembering soothes and resoothes. I imagine that feeling might be what heaven is like. You pop through to the other side, and suddenly every question you have wondered about for years and then given up on is answered. The fate of an object lost in childhood, the names of people met only once at a cocktail party, the difference between William Conrad and Robert Conrad—every answer coming to you in a limpid rush of enlightenment, as if you’d known it all along. ▀

THE CRUSADER

Eliot Spitzer, the attorney general of New York, has risen to national prominence by emulating Teddy Roosevelt and fearlessly taking on powerful interests. His aggressiveness has made him a lot of enemies—but it may propel him to the governor's mansion and beyond

BY SRIDHAR PAPPU

Photograph by Mark Ostow

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Eliot Spitzer—the man whom *Fortune* once deemed the “Enforcer” of Wall Street, whom *Time* once likened to Moses, who was recently slammed by the conservative *National Review* as “the most destructive politician in America”—is at last alone. It’s dusk on a July Sunday at New York’s LaGuardia, the most deflating hour at any airport, but most particularly this one, where young management consultants, who moved to the city in anticipation of actually working in it, wait for their flights to Detroit and Atlanta, lifted in spirit only by the promise of a return the following Thursday. It’s the time when vacationers, who’ve had their fill of getting jostled on the 4 or the 5 or the F, are readying reports for their neighbors back home about seeing *The Lion King* and walking through the NBC Experience store, and looking forward to the prospect of a drive home in the Ford Explorer and maybe some TiVoed *American Idol* before bed.

Yet Spitzer, the attorney general of New York since 1999 and perhaps its next governor, goes unnoticed. Perhaps for one of the last times in his adult life he is with them, really with them—in jeans and a UNION LAWYERS FOR KERRY T-shirt, his legs crossed and a duffel bag at his side. Reading a book called *America and the World*, which was sent to him by the Council on Foreign Relations, he occasionally looks up at the planes on the runway, and then to his left, where no one sits, and to his right, where a tanned young man paces in anticipation of a trip home.

A few minutes later, when Spitzer catches sight of me boarding the same flight he’s taking, to Buffalo, he stands and, with boarding pass in hand, says, “There’s something about flying out on a Sunday night that makes you realize the work week is ready to start.”

Whether he consciously set out to do so or not, Spitzer has spent hundreds of the preceding work weeks transforming himself from a relatively obscure elected state official into one of the most loved and hated—and certainly feared—men in America. In February, a month before the Super Tuesday primaries, Spitzer found himself called upon by John Kerry to endorse him in,

of all places, New Mexico. Spitzer’s rise to national prominence has empowered and given voice to scores of fellow state politicians, reinvigorating the great battle between local and federal power that has been an ineluctable element of American politics since Hamilton and Jefferson.

Make no mistake: Spitzer is the Democratic Party’s future. Or, at the very least, a significant part of it. Yes, there’s the presidential nominee, who at the time of this writing registered with American voters as either “the other guy” or the one who didn’t use faulty information to settle an old score and send U.S. troops into war. But, along with Michigan’s governor, Jennifer Granholm, and the soon-to-be Illinois senator Barack Obama, Spitzer represents the cutting-edge model of the post-Clinton Democrat, drawn from a generation of politicians whose formative experience wasn’t the civil-rights movement, who are tough on crime, and whose foreign policy isn’t shaped by Vietnam.

“He’s an extraordinary candidate,” says the Democratic National Committeeman Robert Zimmerman, talking about Spitzer’s prospects not only for the governorship but also, one imagines, for still higher office. “He’s not received in a partisan light. He gets standing ovations in the heart of Republican suburbs and New York City. It’s the same response. He has a national constituency and a national message. He’s very significant to the Democratic Party, to what we believe in as a country and, quite frankly, what we believe in as Democrats.”

Of course, Spitzer hasn’t actually declared that he’s running for anything. But when—not if—he enters the 2006 gubernatorial race, Spitzer will most likely be faced with what the columnist Mike Royko, remarking on the death of Chicago’s Mayor Richard J. Daley, called “the ingredients for the best political donnybrook we’ve had in fifty years.” That’s because looming for Spitzer is not only the possibility of facing the former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the general election (since the current governor, George Pataki, will in all likelihood step down) but also the very real threat of a knockdown primary race

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with Senator Charles Schumer, who, according to sources within the party, is itching to leave his Washington post for the mansion in Albany. A Schumer-Spitzer primary would be juicy enough, but the prospect of a Giuliani-Spitzer general election is delicious to tabloids in New York, where gossip holds that the two men loathe each other (Spitzer, for his part, denies this).

It's likely that the ultra-competitive Spitzer looks forward to such donnybrooks with relish. "If Eliot decides to run for governor, it won't matter who else is in the race," says Darren Dopp, Spitzer's spokesman, abandoning the conditional in his enthusiasm. "He will use all of his energy and resources to win."

It is 7:00 A.M. on the morning after our flight from LaGuardia when Spitzer (a tall, balding man, forty-five years old, whom three different women with no affiliation to him have recently told me they see as virile and somehow, um, sexy), already awake for two hours, begins his drive from Buffalo's Hyatt Regency to the Chautauqua Institution, in western New York. The institution was founded in 1874 as a gathering place for interdenominational meetings and discussions on religion, science, and the arts: over time it has also become a nine-week summer community for the well-off from northwestern New York and parts of Ohio and Pennsylvania. Speakers at the institution have included Booker T. Washington, Susan B. Anthony, and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

Along the way there's a ten-minute meeting at a bed-and-breakfast with an upstate county executive running for Congress, and a drive past towns such as Westfield, with its statue of Abraham Lincoln thanking Grace Bedell, a little girl who wrote the newly elected President to suggest he'd look cute with a beard, and Mayville, the Chautauqua County seat; the original clerk's office, near where Mayville's two-room courthouse stood, is now Mel's Full-Service Bakery and Café.

"There's almost a midwestern sensibility here," Spitzer says. "You're both geographically and sensibility-wise closer to the Midwest than you are New York City." He pauses for a moment, as if he's just remembered the post he will soon run for, and adds, evidently not wanting to offend future constituents, "But it also feels like upstate New York."

He should know these roads; traveling them made him the Democratic future. In 1994, after working for six years in the Manhattan district attorney's office and a stint in private practice, he took a run at the attorney general's office. He had no previous political experience, and finished last among four in the party's primary. For the next four years he canvassed and crisscrossed the state in his Dodge minivan, showing up in the driveways of local Democratic Party officials, attending every fundraising dinner he could. (A few days before our trip, standing in his office, he pointed to a map of the state that hangs on his wall, explaining that it had been given to him during his successful 1998 campaign. "I said, 'If we win, we'll put this on the wall.' As a

demonstration of my parochialism, I actually think looking at a map of New York is kind of neat. You can see the Finger Lakes. I've been to basically every town on that map.")

"Quite literally, he wore out his shoes," Spitzer's wife, Silda, told me recently over breakfast on the Upper East Side. "He has one pair of dress shoes. I find it quite amusing to read the number of articles that speak about Eliot's privileged background. His family is very comfortable now but everything they have has come by hard work and using a fierce intelligence. It really is that American dream that he comes from, and no one in his family takes it for granted. He lives simply and in a very spare way."

"If I'm going to Kmart or Wal-Mart or somewhere similar," she continues, "Eliot looks at the bills." (According to IRS filings, last year Spitzer earned \$755,000—the majority of which, \$596,000, came from rent on two buildings he and his family own on Madison Avenue.)

In some ways Spitzer's is a familiar New York City story: His father, Bernard, who was born to immigrants from Austria and who grew up on the Lower East Side and fell in love one summer in the Catskills with a woman named Anne (whose parents were from what was then Palestine), turned a civil-engineering degree into a multimillion-dollar high-rise-apartment business. Eliot, the youngest of three children, spent his childhood in the relatively upscale Riverdale sec-

Spitzer is the cutting-edge model of the post-Clinton Democrat, drawn from a generation whose formative experience wasn't the civil-rights movement, who are tough on crime, and whose foreign policy isn't shaped by Vietnam.

tion of the Bronx. In what has become the first chapter of the Spitzer legend, Eliot's parents turned their household dinners into public-policy forums, Kennedy-family style, where they would force their children to come up with topics for discussion. These could include anything from political races to literature, as long as the children were being compelled to think about the state of the world.

And so Eliot—who got his secondary education at the leafy, near suburban campus of Horace Mann, where he thrived as a tennis player at the same time that John McEnroe was dominating at the school's rival, Trinity, on the Upper West Side—did not go into the world a trivial man. In fact, it might be said he left home, for Princeton, a teenage wonk. (Today he's an adult wonk, with an attention to detail that seems borderline obsessive. Before interviewing with me, Spitzer had his spokesman, Dopp, drop me an e-mail asking, "Would you mind sending me a little personal information?"

Nothing elaborate, Dopp wrote, just a “brief sketch” of myself. “Are you from [New York] originally? Where did you go to school? ... What does your Dad do? What do you do to stay in shape? Anything you wish to share. Spitzer likes to know.”) As a sophomore at Princeton, Spitzer ran for and won the presidency of the undergraduate student government—something that earned him regular mentions in *The Daily Princetonian* and the scorn of the likes of Virginia Postrel, now a libertarian columnist, who on her Web site deemed her old Princeton classmate Spitzer to be part of a group of “resume-polishing student-council weenies.” If true, the résumé he was polishing was hardly typical: that summer, taking only a few dollars and an emergency credit card, Spitzer went to work as a day laborer in Atlanta and New Orleans and upstate New York, spending his days handling fiberglass insulation or picking tomatoes and his nights in one-night boarding houses. Why? Because he understood he’d been given advantages, and wanted to know if he could survive without them.

“He didn’t know he was a geek, but he was,” says James Cramer, a former hedge-fund manager who currently co-hosts a talk show on CNBC. He and Spitzer both attended Harvard Law School and met their first week there, in 1981. Spitzer may have been a geek, but he was a tireless geek. In Cambridge he worked as an editor at the *Harvard Law Review*. As a summer intern for Lloyd Constantine, then the assistant attorney general of New York in charge of anti-trust enforcement, Spitzer worked on the prosecution of a price-fixing case involving ambulance services in Syracuse. (“I’ve had hundreds of interns and hundreds of students,” Constantine says. “He was the best. He was different from the day he walked in. He had an air of confidence that said he was a leader. He reeked of it. He came in and in a very polite way his message was ‘I’m smarter than you, and I can lick you.’”) During the school year Spitzer was a research assistant to Alan Dershowitz, and worked on the appeal case of Claus von Bulow, which was later made infamous by the 1990 Jeremy Irons movie *Reversal of Fortune*.

“One time Dershowitz gave us his Celtics tickets,” recalls Cliff Sloan, one of Spitzer’s Harvard classmates and now general counsel for the online versions of *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*, “and the Celtics were playing the Knicks [at Boston Garden]. And here we are in the middle of this very pro-Celtics crowd, and Eliot was on his feet cheering for the Knicks. He was angering everyone around us, especially the regulars—but he was unbowed in his full-blown enthusiastic support of the Knicks. Eliot’s just fearless.”

Perhaps the best thing Spitzer got out of his time at Harvard was Silda, a fellow law-school student, whom he married two days before the stock-market collapse of 1987. She is tall, blonde, and discreetly pretty in the manner of, say, a young Blythe Danner, and comes from an America that to the vast majority of New Yorkers seems as foreign and remote as Mars. The product of small-town North Carolina life, Silda arrived in Cambridge from an all-women’s school,

Meredith College, in Raleigh. Today she runs, without salary, a foundation she created for city children, and she can speak passionately, with a precision that matches her highly articulate husband’s, about everything from parenting to international law. She is, in short, perfect first-lady material, though outwardly reluctant to contemplate that role.

“That’s going to be Eliot’s decision,” she says of a run for governor. “We’ll see where that ends up falling out. I think he’d be great. It’s not something I’m pushing for anyway.”

One could certainly sympathize if Silda were to approach her husband one day and say, “Enough.” After all, she was five months pregnant with the couple’s third child when Spitzer announced his 1994 campaign. And she was a completely sleep-deprived mother when Spitzer began one of the strangest political campaigns in New York history, four years later. After he emerged the winner, with only 41 percent of the vote, in a three-way Democratic primary, in 1998, the *New York Times* editorial page half-heartedly (at best) threw its support to him over his Republican opponent, Dennis Vacco. The *Times* wrote that Spitzer had “misled the public about how his father’s wealth was used to support about \$9 million in loans that financed his campaigns in 1994 and 1998,” adding, “We endorse Mr. Spitzer because Mr. Vacco’s performance and his key policy positions make him an even worse choice.” Not the most ringing endorsement.

Even from his own party support for Spitzer was only lukewarm. After being prodded into endorsing him on the steps of the New York Public Library, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan walked away, according to a source close to Spitzer, murmuring, “Nice kid. He’s gonna get killed.”

Spitzer didn’t get killed. But on election night his lead was so slight that Vacco would not concede; instead he waited forty-one days, through a vicious, tenacious recount. (In the end Spitzer won by 25,000 votes.) Vacco, now in private practice, says of his onetime nemesis, “I think he’s done a credible job.”

After he won his battle with Vacco, Spitzer didn’t wait long to pick another. In 1999 and 2000, his first two years in office, he led coalitions of northeastern states in suits against midwestern utilities whose pollution had drifted into their air. He has continued to attract attention with the battles he’s picked. When the Bush Administration’s Environmental Protection Agency tried to roll back the standards set by the Clean Air Act, Spitzer led a group of states to halt it. Most recently, when it was revealed that GlaxoSmithKline, maker of the antidepressant Paxil, had hidden studies showing an increased risk of suicidal thoughts in teenagers when they began using the drug, Spitzer sued, saying the company had not used fair disclosure when recommending the drug to doctors.

In answer to those who say Spitzer is interested only in creating a national name for himself, his supporters point to

the fights he has picked locally, in New York. He took action against Manhattan's Cristede's grocery store—successfully demanding back pay and more than minimum wage for its deliverymen. He represented eighteen day laborers in a suit against a contractor in Southampton, and he brokered an agreement with many of New York City's Korean grocers to raise the wages of their largely Mexican work force from around \$3.50 an hour to minimum wage. ("He tries to speak Spanish," says Arturo Sarukahn, Mexico's consul general in New York. "He needs practice, but he's not bad. He's articulate enough to make these day laborers, who are mostly undocumented and who are afraid, feel comfortable.")

For his part, Spitzer says he is not some rogue force, picking fights willy-nilly: rather, he is merely following the model of another New York public official, whose portrait is prominent on his office wall. "I don't have Teddy Roosevelt's picture up there because I have any illusions of grandeur," he says. "It's because I believe he's the one that came closest to getting it—that the market needs those boundaries."

"The three areas where we have been most active, quite frankly, are where he was most active," Spitzer continues. "Trust-busting is analogous to what we've done on Wall Street. He was the first one who understood that preserving our environment and passing it on to the next generation was something we should do. And he believed in protecting labor—not because he said we have a right to a particular wage at X dollars an hour, but preserving labor in the sense of holding businesses to a certain minimum threshold, which is why the labor cases are the ones I feel most passionately about."

But the labor cases are not what made Spitzer a nationally known figure. Indeed, had it not been for the dizzying financial boom of the 1990s and the hangover that followed, he might have remained merely a well-meaning and eager bureaucrat, grabbing blurbs in the New York tabloids for busting up an auto-dealership fraud or calling out an Albany bank for not hiring Hispanics. But he happened to arrive in the attorney general's office a year and four months before the collapse of the NASDAQ, in whose meteoric rise millions of Americans had envisioned early beach-house retirements. In other words, he was lucky.

Boy, was he: all the elements for a rise to prominence on a wave of defrauded investors' fury were in place. Spitzer had an angry public. He had an SEC, directed by Harvey Pitt, that had held back its investigative dogs despite the damage done by Wall Street shenanigans and the declining stock market. And most important, he had the Martin Act—a seldom used 1921 New York statute that gives the state's attorney general grand powers for dealing with the financial markets, the grandest of which is the ability to charge someone with fraud without having to show fraudulent intent.

Invoking the Martin Act, Spitzer went after Wall Street with the hammer of Thor. In May of 2002 his office announced a \$100 million settlement with Merrill Lynch

that revealed to the public the guts of a flawed—if not corrupt—stock-ranking system. Spitzer publicized e-mails showing that Merrill Lynch analysts had recommended dot-com stocks—with whose companies Merrill's investment-banking arm was doing business—to investors while privately referring to those same stocks as "dogs" or "junk." By the end of 2002 Spitzer had gotten the ten biggest firms on Wall Street to pony up \$900 million in fines and agree to structural changes that require firms to buy independent stock research and disclose it to investors, and that bar analysts from helping investment bankers recruit business with the promise of a good stock rating. By the following year Pitt had resigned from the SEC, and William Donaldson, a former diplomat and a former chief executive of the New York Stock Exchange, had taken his place, promising, among other things, to rein in state regulators like Spitzer.

"A lot of what Eliot did was take aim at something [the bogus stock-ranking system] that everyone in the industry thought was corrupt" but about which most people figured, "What the heck, nobody gets hurt," James Cramer, the CNBC talk-show host, told me. "We all knew it was corrupt, but nobody wanted to pull back the covers and reveal it to be corrupt."

"He didn't take any power away from anyone," Cramer continued. The people and institutions that should have been using their power to prevent stock fraud had already abdicated it. "So Eliot came in. When Ronald Reagan came to power, he wanted to give power back to the states. The states got it. And this"—a rampaging state attorney general—"is what it looks like."

Having wielded his power against one part of the financial-services industry, Spitzer took on another: mutual funds. First his office went after Edward Stern and Canary Capital Partners, alleging that they had been allowed by Bank of America and others to illegally buy mutual-fund shares after the close of the market and profit from selling them the following day. It led the way to a joint settlement with the SEC that forced Janus Capital to refund \$100 million to investors adversely affected by the illicit preferential treatment the firm had given to "market-timers"—speculators who frequently trade large sums of money in and out of the fund in an attempt to profit on short-term fluctuations in pricing. It forced Richard Strong to resign from his own fund company for selling shares of the mutual funds he oversaw while encouraging his investors to hold on to them. And although the SEC forced Alliance Capital to pay \$250 million in restitution for its own market-timing abuses (though Alliance acknowledged no wrongdoing), Spitzer made a separate case that the firm's fees were too high (so high, he said, that the firm was "[enriching itself] at the expense of investors"), and—using his own powers under the Martin Act—compelled the company to reduce them by 20 percent. As a result other fund companies fell in line, slashing their fees before Spitzer's office slashed at them.

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Spitzer's strategy for correcting criminal behavior has been unorthodox. In the 1980s, when Rudy Giuliani made a name for himself as a federal prosecutor, he did it by not only landing mob convictions but also arresting and handcuffing high-flying financiers in front of rolling TV cameras. But—aside from a couple of exceptions in the mutual-fund cases—Spitzer got no convictions. There were no trials, no scenes of Spitzer or one of his deputies on Court TV, no tabloid-published courtroom sketches of his defendants inside a federal courthouse. There were only fines and, many have argued, Ike Turner-esque promises by the firms that they would change their behavior forever.

"I always felt that if he felt the firms had actually broken the law in terms of investor research, he should have prosecuted them either as individuals or as firms," the *Wall Street Journal* editorial-page editor Paul Gigot, who has occasionally excoriated Spitzer in his columns, told me. "Let a jury decide. I always thought it was strange that he stopped short of prosecution in actual instances. He got the maximum amount of publicity out of ... settling for some kind of agreement that is less than revolutionary or remarkable." In other words, Gigot said, Spitzer got prosecution-level publicity without actually having to prosecute. "I would argue the Enron prosecutions are going to have a greater impact on corporate behavior than any of the Eliot Spitzer settlements, because you have the lesson of people going to jail. In stock-market research, nobody's going to jail."

Spitzer has heard this argument before. And on a summer day in his twenty-fifth-floor downtown-Manhattan office, from which, nearly three years earlier, he had watched a plane slice through the second of the Twin Towers, he attempted to explain to me what he was really after in these financial cases: reforming the internal architecture of Wall Street.

Achieving structural reform was more important than punishing any one analyst, he told me, "even a Jack Grubman"—referring to the former Salomon Smith Barney stock analyst whose career ended with a \$15 million fine and a lifetime ban from working with securities but no indictment. "Structural reform is much more important than putting people away in cuffs," Spitzer continued. "I'm not going to be the guy who prosecutes the twenty-eight-year-old analyst who's writing these junk reports because he's been pressured to do so, and is in a system that gives him every incentive to do that. His defense would be that everybody knew this was the game. When it came to the individual analyst, it seemed unfair to make him or her the scapegoat for that system."

Critics on the right assert that Spitzer's attempts at regulation have impeded the operation of the free market in a way that's damaging to the public interest. In response, Spitzer invokes Teddy Roosevelt. "Roosevelt was one of the few—if not the only—voices who looked at an economic structure that was increasingly dominated by trusts and power brokers who were saying, 'This is the market; this is what generates wealth.' And Roosevelt said, 'No, that's not the proper way

the market should work, and we need antitrust laws. We need competition.' That's exactly what we're trying to do."

Continuing to speak about his libertarian critics Spitzer says, "They reflexively evoke the words 'free market' without an understanding of what the term means. I believe in the market as much as anybody, but I believe I understand it better than they do. I understand that a market needs to have rules by which it lives. If you have a marketplace unbridled by rules that mandate integrity and transparency, then the market will not work." Indeed, his efforts at imposing regulation on Wall Street derive from a "very deep-seated belief on my part that competition does work," he says. "That's what the marketplace is all about." And if the agencies of the federal government—the SEC, the FDA, the FCC, whatever—abdicate their authority to protect that marketplace, Spitzer says, "I view it as my responsibility to twenty million New Yorkers who are investors, who work in the marketplace," to assume it.

Spitzer is well aware of what he has helped create: a system of one-upmanship in which the state and federal governments try to outdo each other, both hoping to seize headlines and regulatory jurisdiction first. Indeed, on July 1, when *The Wall Street Journal* reported on the SEC's new proactive "wildcatting" program of looking out for scams without hard proof of wrongdoing, it explained that the program was created "after New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer exposed a number of abusive anti-investor practices in the securities markets, upstaging the SEC."

"Look," Spitzer says, "the way I view the discomfort of those moments is that it's well worth having awakened the SEC, so that it is now doing what it should have been doing all along." He concedes that his actions may also have encouraged other state attorneys general to overstep their bounds. "We haven't quite figured out—and we may need to figure out—how to deal with the few state actors who've become more disruptive than is appropriate. That's going to be a real problem."

To hear Spitzer speak about his job, about what it has become, about what he's made it, is like sitting down with Bruce Wayne, Batman's alter ego, and asking him why he dresses like a bat and lurks in the corners of Gotham each night. He didn't want these cases, Spitzer says—really. But there was a void that needed to be addressed. The process that began when President Ronald Reagan dissolved federal constraints and regulations that had been in place since Franklin Roosevelt's time—a process that has continued through the Administration of George W. Bush—had created a power vacuum that no states-rights advocate thought would ever be filled. If Joe Chill's bullet gave birth to the Dark Knight, Reagan's "new federalism" gave birth to Eliot Spitzer. What was once the prerogative of the federal government is now the prerogative of the states—or so Spitzer sees it.

He sometimes wonders, however, where the right bal-

ance between state and federal government lies; he was, after all, opposed to Reagan's ostensible aim of returning power to the states from the federal government. "In law school I was opposed to the Reagan Revolution, which was premised on a devolution of power to the states," he says. "I had this vision, this very classic New Deal vision, of federal agencies in Washington doing their job." Which is not to say, Spitzer acknowledges, that Reagan didn't correctly perceive an underlying truth: federal regulatory agencies had become enormously cumbersome and overly bureaucratic.

Spitzer is at pains to make clear that he is not trying to usurp federal prerogatives. The states "should not be the exclusive overseer of the marketplace," he says. "The SEC is the primary enforcer in the securities market. The EPA is the primary enforcer in the environmental market. In the labor markets there is the Labor Department. By and large, we should be the secondary or tertiary enforcers. But in an era when there has been such retrenchment at the federal level, we become more significant. And when the structural breakdowns are of such magnitude that something needs to be done, as I would argue was the case with investment research and mutual funds and the Clean Air Act, we will jump in."

"The things I set out to do three, four years ago appeared at the time to be insane," Spitzer says. "Now everybody here today is saying, 'Look at all this notoriety that he's gotten.' Back then they thought I was nuts. Here I am, going up against the financial-services community. People thought it was political suicide. And the notion back then that I thought it was good politics is ludicrous. Nonetheless, I was concerned about giving these state agencies the latitude and capacity to intervene. It doesn't mean I hesitated, because I went after these cases, but now the genie's out of the bottle, and we're going to try and figure out how we cap it. How do we control this thing?"

When Spitzer, along with two members of his office staff and me, finishes the hour-and-fifteen-minute drive from Buffalo and reaches the closed-off grounds of the Chautauqua Institution, a hard rain has begun to fall. In the distance, beyond leafy paths, in a grand amphitheater built in 1893, where Franklin Roosevelt delivered his "I hate war" speech and where Spitzer will speak today, a choir makes itself heard.

By the time Spitzer is introduced as "the people's lawyer" by Chautauqua's president, Thomas Becker, one thing is clear: this is Spitzer country. Surveying the 3,000 or so people sitting on the yellow wooden benches of the amphitheater, one sees the core of Spitzer's constituency: educated, older, and largely white upper-class men and women—the sort of people who made the mistake of turning on CNBC one day and believing, really believing, that Pets.com would change the way our dogs ate.

With thunder in the background, Spitzer delivers not a speech but a sermon. He attacks the free-market-is-everything

theories of the "Chicago School" of economics. He evokes Teddy Roosevelt, and the need for government intervention against self-interested actors who would distort the market for their own ends. And then, wrapping the audience more and more tightly in his grip, he tells the story of his negotiating with an unnamed investment bank—which is clearly Merrill Lynch—to try to reach a settlement before things escalated to litigation and a public fight. He says the negotiations weren't going well because he had demanded that the investment bank make its e-mails public, to reveal the truth of how the company had been operating. Everything else was on the table, he says, but he wanted the e-mails.

"The last phone call I got from the lawyer representing this investment bank went as follows," Spitzer says. "He said: 'Eliot, be careful. Be careful,' he said. 'We have powerful friends.'" There is a collective *oooooh* from the audience members. He has confirmed their deepest suspicions and

To hear Spitzer speak about what his job has become is like sitting down with Batman and asking him why he lurks in the corners of Gotham each night. He didn't want these cases—really. But there was a void to be addressed.

reaffirmed their collective intellect. They weren't stupid or greedy—just deceived by bad, bad men. And because he can, he reaches higher, moving beyond Wall Street to what he calls "the crisis of accountability."

"It is government," he says. "It is the media. It is the not-for-profit sector. It is the CIA. It is our religious denominations. If you think about it, over the last four or five years there is hardly an institution that has not somehow been affected by this crisis of accountability. It makes you wonder what happened ... What we are going through right now is an effort to resuscitate these values, and we do it the same way we did it with street crime. We become intolerant of even petty offenses in an effort to restore the moral regime we all know that we should live by."

Spitzer gets a standing ovation. He is a rock star now, and as such he is met after the speech by a group of people wanting a piece of him. Standing in the back entrance of the amphitheater, he gets an autograph request. One man, wearing Birkenstocks, has been a corporate lawyer for five years, he says, but now "I'd like to switch sides." Another man asks if Spitzer speaks to Harvard clubs. Spitzer says he prefers Princeton clubs, but yes, he'll address the Crimson.

Another groupie, a middle-aged man, comes up to him and says, "I'd like to say two things: that you stay in your ethics and that you run for President."

"The first is more important than the second," Spitzer responds. "Trust me."

By the time Spitzer returns to Buffalo, the storm that thundered in the background while he spoke at the institution has fully dissipated. That's too bad—because to see the empty streets of that city in broad daylight can sink a person into despondency. Once the nation's eighth largest city, Buffalo has half the population it once had; much of the day you can see an empty trolley move from one end of downtown to another, passing empty storefronts. Buffalo is the home of great early-1900s architecture; most of its office space now lies fallow, the steel mills that lined Lake Erie are gone, and much of the waterfront is contaminated. The city's last flicker of renewal came four years ago, when the founder of Adelphia Communications, John Rigas, pledged to move a chunk of his company's operations to the city, bringing 1,000 new jobs and a fifteen-story waterfront office tower. Adelphia has since declared bankruptcy. In July, Rigas and one of his sons were found guilty on eighteen counts of bank fraud, securities fraud, and conspiracy. That tower was never built.

Buffalo is a forsaken place. And yet it is the second largest city in New York, and Spitzer has work to do there: a check-in with some of his deputies in the regional office; a

press conference, with the U.S. attorney Michael Battle, to honor a Niagara Falls policeman for his work on Internet spamming and child pornography; a meeting with labor union leaders in the local office of the AFL-CIO, which occupies a couple of fluorescent-lit rooms on the eighth floor of the Ellicott Square Building, designed by Daniel Burnham. At its christening, in 1896, the building was the largest office structure in the world.

"Mr. Governor," says John Kaczorowski, the president of the Buffalo Council of the AFL-CIO, as Spitzer enters the room. Thin, with a ruddy complexion, Kaczorowski has the eyes of many labor leaders I've met over the years: sixty-two going on 360. He worked for thirty-five years at a GM engine plant; for the past nine years he's held this job, representing 100,000 workers whose very livelihood and existence, one feels, could evaporate at any moment.

No, we're not in Chautauqua anymore. We're in a small office, crammed with fourteen labor leaders from the region, representing both public and private employees—men and women who can't afford to spend their morning hours attending grand lectures on the business of ethics or the ethics of business. It matters to them not at all which Ivy League clubs Spitzer is willing to make speeches at.

After some introductions Spitzer is given the floor by Kaczorowski and cuts quickly to their shared concerns.

"The thing I need to be asking is what can we be doing differently in terms of cases?" he says. "What can we be doing to help the economy here? We've all got that major need to keep the jobs, find others to come in. So on one hand, we're always looking for more cases to make, litigations, that's our day-to-day job. On the other hand, not just because I'm thinking of running for a different office in '06, what can we do to get jobs here, keep the ones we've got, and somehow take away the argument it's cheaper to do it somewhere else?"

With that Spitzer has opened the floodgates. There are complaints about the price of electric power—which, whether at residential or commercial rates, is among the highest in the nation. There are complaints about the fiscal clampdowns of the city's Control Board, put in place by the state to rein in Buffalo's finances, and about the price of gas, and about hospitals and nursing homes that are shutting down.

"For those of you that don't live here, you have no idea what we have to put up with," says Dan Boody, a representative of the Painters District Council #4. "We're fighting for our lives up here. We represent a lot of people; we have to provide a lot for them. Jobs are number one, but we keep losing our jobs—whether the company's been sold or they're being displaced. Somebody's gotta come into this town and take control. And it's not going to be the governor we have today. And if you're gonna be the guy, we've got some serious problems here and we need to make some changes."

As if he's inhaled all the disputes and predicaments and concerns and distresses of the room (and, beyond that, the region), Spitzer says, "What you're saying is right. We've

PROGRESS

Battling cascading
steam, my ancient

neighbor would face
his fogged mirror,

cutthroat razor
mowing down, up,

piratical blade
making every

stroke a page torn
from a life story

told the hard way,
because "Someone,

by God, has to keep
the old skills alive."

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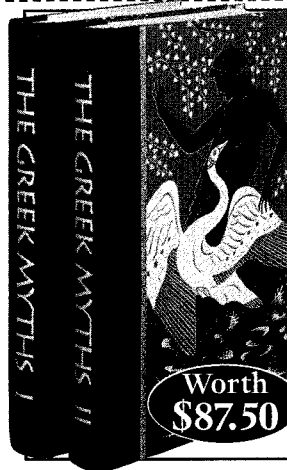
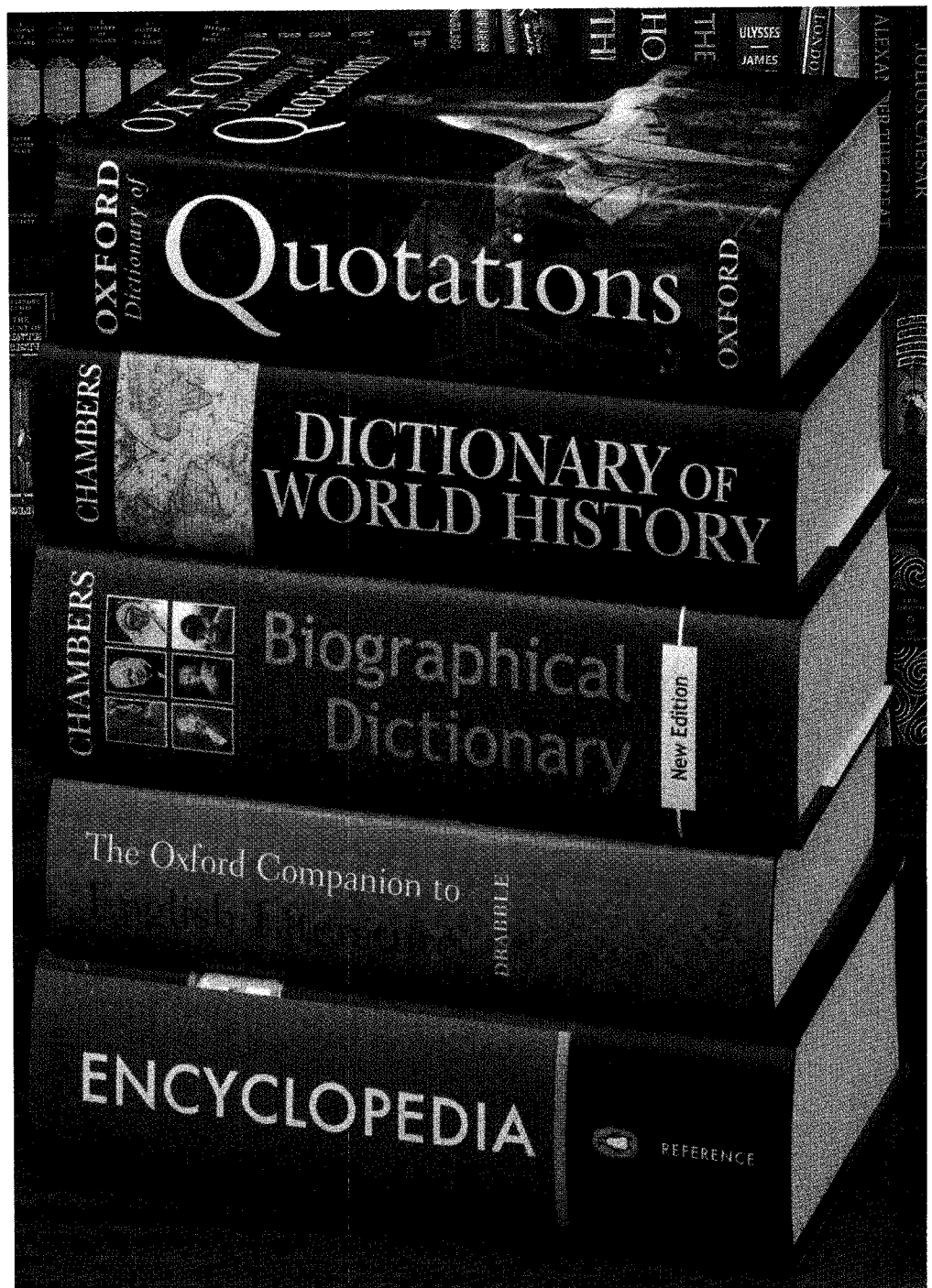
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got to somehow create a new economic model that's going to get new jobs here."

"Forget the individual cases," he tells the labor leaders. "There are two themes that run through everything: transportation and energy. You're simply not going to keep factories here, whether it's steel or GM or General Mills, if transportation and energy costs are high. Energy and transportation used to be our comparative advantage—business started here in the early part of the nineteenth century because of the Erie Canal, with proximity to lakes. We had cheap power. Now energy costs are higher, so they're moving to the Midwest and South, where they can be on the interstate with cheap energy that's paid for by the states."

"So those are the two things I can tell you where government can do better," Spitzer says. "And we have had completely misguided policies when it comes to them. And both are infrastructure issues. Government can't put a GM plant here, but government can go to GM and say, 'We'll give you [affordable] transportation and energy costs.' We haven't had coherent energy policies for twenty years."

Speaking softly, Kaczorowski says, "Things were rosy twenty years ago."

The next day Ken Langone, a co-founder of Home Depot and the chairman of the New York Stock Exchange's compensation committee from 1999 to 2003, is screaming in the Manhattan offices of his investment-banking firm, Invemed.

"I'm fighting for the little guy!" yelps Langone, whose wealth *Forbes* has estimated at \$820 million. "How about some guy that doesn't have my resources or reputation? Or my track record? I'm proud of what I've done with my life."

One can understand, if not sympathize with, Langone's agitation: he is the only other person named in a suit Spitzer filed in May demanding that Richard Grasso, the former head of the NYSE, return more than \$100 million of the \$139.5 million compensation package he received in August of last year. (Three weeks after the size of his pay package was revealed, Grasso was forced to resign.) In his suit Spitzer charged that the NYSE compensation committee had been misled about aspects of Grasso's contract and that the formula whereby his compensation figure was derived did not accord with the rules that govern the state's not-for-profit status, under which the NYSE is registered. Frank Ashen, a top deputy of Grasso's, admitted to Spitzer's office that he had provided "incomplete, inaccurate and misleading" information regarding how much Grasso was making. An outside consulting firm, Mercer Human Resource Consulting, said in the suit that its analysis of the payment, which was submitted to the board, included "inaccuracies and omissions."

Langone, the son of a plumber and the first member of his family to go to college, was no longer a member of the compensation committee when it agreed to the \$139.5 million, but he and his board recommended the payout.

The figure, he says, was based on the internal recommendations of the NYSE board member Stanley Gault in 1995. Langone makes me read these recommendations from a black binder: in order to attract and retain "world class talent," the document says, Gault had advised that the NYSE needed to pay its executives the way top companies in the private sector paid theirs.

"When I turned over this committee to the new committee," Langone says, "I told them they had a complete free hand to do whatever they wanted to do with Grasso. They chose to go ahead and do what we would have done, but they had the freedom not to do it at all."

In the event, the committee voted unanimously for the \$139.5 million payment. And Langone and Grasso (who sued the exchange in July for at least \$50 million for defamation and breach of contract by his successor, John Reed) have found allies in both Spitzer's friend Jim Cramer and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page.

"We've been very critical of the board of the NYSE and Spitzer," Paul Gigot says. "The attorney general has discretion on whether or not to follow up on a request. Let me put it this way: there's substantial political benefit in going after the poster child for executive compensation. That's easy."

"But if he loses in court," Gigot continues, "he'll have a black eye."

Pounding his hand against a table, the irate Langone, whom Spitzer is suing for \$18 million, says, "Tell him this: Teddy Roosevelt would never do something like this. Teddy Roosevelt would never have filed the kind of complaint that he filed. You remember when Lloyd Bentsen was debating Dan Quayle, and Quayle was comparing himself to John F. Kennedy? Bentsen said, 'I knew John Kennedy; you're no John Kennedy.' I didn't know Teddy Roosevelt, but I've read a lot about Teddy Roosevelt. Eliot Spitzer's no Teddy Roosevelt."

It may very well not matter whether the state wins the case—not to Eliot Spitzer, anyway. The case may take years to reach court, and Spitzer (who, *Newsweek* reported, received a campaign contribution of \$10,000 from the law firm now representing Langone) will be on the campaign trail, presenting himself as a man calling for accountability, for responsibility, for a new moral directive—helped along by government enforcement—in American life.

When I convey Langone's arguments to Spitzer, he replies flatly, "They can say whatever they want. They are not-for-profit, and they are bound by that structure. I've said repeatedly that I'll wait till we're in court to argue the facts. But this is one of the most unambiguous cases I've ever seen, where you have structure for determining compensation that was grotesquely flawed. Even if you were to accept their structure, what he was paid was tens and tens of millions of dollars above that flawed structure."

"We will win." ■

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS 2004

The Big Picture by James Fallows and V.V. Ganeshanathan

Who Needs Harvard? by Gregg Easterbrook

Independent Counsel by Nicholas Confessore

The Third Way by Richard M. Freehand



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS LYONS

The Big Picture

Our annual survey of the admissions landscape uncovered recent and upcoming changes to the process, growing concern about tuition increases, and serious questions about whether colleges are fulfilling their mission

BY JAMES FALLOWS AND
V.V. GANESHANANTHAN

This past spring, as colleges mailed out letters of acceptance or rejection to applicants for the incoming freshman class, *The Atlantic* began contacting people involved in the admissions process to ask what had been surprising, significant, or simply new in this year's cycle. Through the summer we spoke with dozens of people, from every region of the country. About half were high school counselors and private consultants who advise college-bound students (and their families) about where, when, and how to send applications; the other half were college admissions officers and deans who choose from among the applicants. The people we spoke with represented a wide range of high schools and colleges: public and private, large and small, coed and single-sex, with a variety of racial, ethnic, and economic makeups. We couldn't cover every acre of the college landscape, but we believe we have a useful sample.

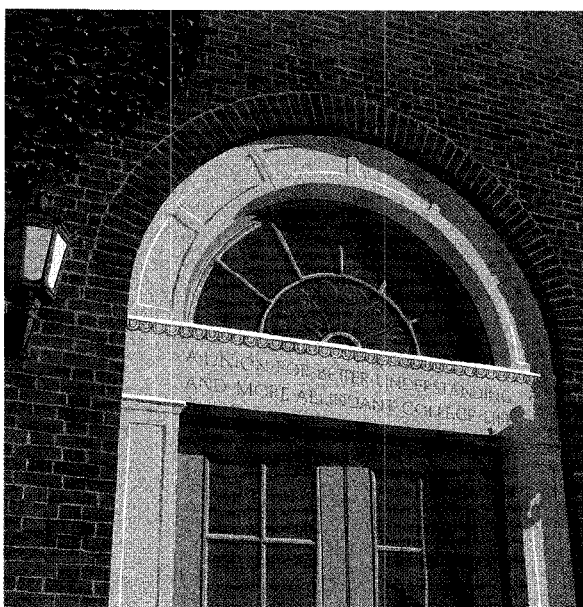
A year ago, when we conducted our first such survey, three major themes ran through the interviews. One was the increasingly chaotic nature of admissions at the most selective colleges. An ongoing demographic bulge meant that 20 percent more students were applying for a relatively fixed number of places at elite schools than had applied only a decade earlier. At the same time, pervasive grade inflation in high schools and the "recentering" of SAT scores (which raised applicants' scores, on average, by more than 100 points) made it harder for admissions committees to tell one top-level applicant from another. This in turn made it harder for students to count on getting into a particular school. To protect themselves, students—especially well-informed ones from elite public and private high schools—began sending out more applications. This flood only increased the pressure on already over-

whelmed admissions committees and made it still harder for anyone to predict which students would be accepted by which colleges.

A second theme last year was the pressure on all participants in the admissions process to "marketize" their behavior. Colleges tried to drum up more applicants, in part because turning down a greater number made them more "selective" and improved their standing in numerical rankings like those of *U.S. News & World Report*. Counselors advised students on how best to "package" themselves as appealing candidates. And the new discipline of "enrollment management" allowed colleges subtly to ensure that they didn't have too many students who would ask for financial aid.

The third theme was the reminder that despite its problems, the American college system is so varied and flexible that nearly every student

can eventually find a good "match"—a school that fits his or her skills, needs, and interests. Despite the maddening aspects of college admissions and the mounting financial burdens college placed on many families, virtually all the college officials we interviewed said they wished students and parents alike would approach the admissions process with less anxiety.



We found rich new evidence of all three themes again this year.

The demographic and social pressures are still so intense that admission to the most selective colleges is hard for any student to count on. "From one year to the next, you can't predict the difficulty of getting into a given school," says Nancy Marcus, formerly an adviser at New Trier High School, in Illinois, and now an independent consultant. "Schools that were once 'likes' for certain students—Northwestern, Vanderbilt, Colgate—are now reaches." Fran Landau, the director of school counseling at Walt Whitman High School, in Maryland, says that decisions at top schools often seem inexplicable, or based on whether a student has forged a personal connection with an admissions officer. "It's like the kids have to be exciting to them now," Landau says.

The process is unpredictable from the colleges' perspective as well. Bruce Poch, the vice president and dean of admissions at Pomona College, in southern California, says he used to see a two-year cycle in applications: they would surge one year, leading to a higher rate of rejections, and "the kids would be scared away the following

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year," he says. "Now that doesn't seem to happen anymore." Charles Deacon, the dean of admissions at Georgetown, says that this year was the first time in thirty years that Georgetown accepted none of the students on its waiting list, which typically numbers in the hundreds. That was because the "yield," or proportion of accepted students who decide to enroll, was higher than normal, owing to changes in other schools' policies.

One difference from last year is a slight displacement downward in the glut of applications. Tom Parker, the dean of admission and financial aid at Amherst, says that applicants at "the bottom of the pool"—that is, those quickly eliminated from consideration—are not applying anymore, and that those applications are presumably "beginning to slide to less selective schools." Andrew McNeill, the director of college counseling at the Taft School in Connecticut, concurs. This year, he says, he saw a surge in applications to less selective schools, indicating "we're in the beginning of a shift in where that bubble applies."

The marketization of the admissions process has only intensified over the past year, at both ends of the process. High school guidance counselors report that they are under

the director of admissions at Washington University, denies any attempts to influence the ranking and says that the school's skyrocketing applications are a result of good word of mouth from current students about the school's "exceptional experience." DePaul University, the largest Catholic university in the country, has taken a very different approach: as the number of its applicants has risen, DePaul has grown. Its current freshman class of 2,350 is nearly two and a half times the size of the 1992 freshman class. Jon Boeckenstedt, DePaul's associate vice-president for enrollment management, points out that if DePaul had not changed its class size, it would be accepting only 28 percent of all applicants—a level of selectivity comparable to Johns Hopkins—rather than the 68 percent it accepts now. Boeckenstedt says DePaul decided "to turn the extra demand into greater access, rather than greater selectivity," because part of its announced mission is to create opportunities for "first generation" students—those whose parents did not go to college.

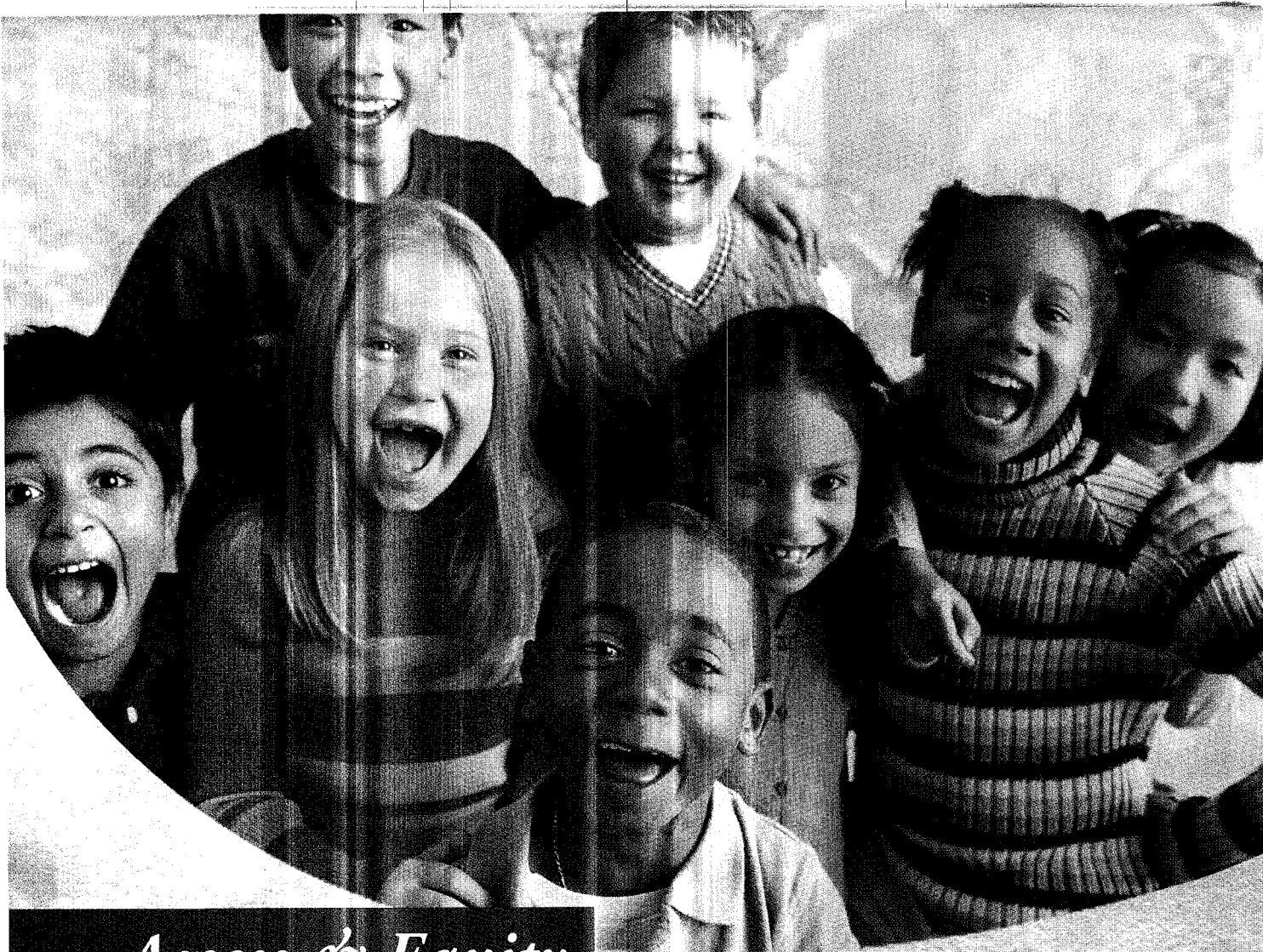
And just as they did last year, high school counselors and college admissions deans alike said they wished students and their families did not find the entire process so stressful. Most high school counselors emphasized the point examined by Gregg Easterbrook in this issue ("Who Needs Harvard?," page 128): that although going to college makes a large difference in students' future lives, where they go is considerably less important. Similarly, many college deans told us they would like to see applicants who are less tightly wound and overprogrammed than many of today's students. This preference is unlikely to have much impact, though, because high schoolers notice that their laid-back friends aren't generally getting into the most selective colleges. Robin Mamlet, the dean of admission and financial aid at Stanford, has often warned against the risk of overstressing students, and points out that the average student admitted to Stanford has taken only six Advanced Placement courses in the last three years of high school. But even she says that "students who are told to relax don't believe that students who do relax will be accepted."

In addition to these familiar elements, new themes and concerns emerged from our discussions with advisers and admissions officers this year. The details and emphases varied, with some observations contradicting others, but the comments fell into three broad categories. The first was the process of admissions, and how it was affected by changes in early-decision programs, the SAT, and the treatment of athletes. The second was the financial squeeze on higher education, and the widespread concern that what was once America's most powerful vehicle for social mobility is being priced out of the reach of ordinary Americans. And the third was an even broader question about the public effect of higher education. With striking frequency, people involved in the daily work of

Nearly every college official we spoke with told us how some other college was playing the market, usually by aggressively prospecting for applicants.

ceaseless pressure to "produce" by getting students into exclusive colleges. This pressure is greatest at the most elite private schools, where parents feel they are paying extra for results. A sense that high school counselors are not doing enough has also led to booming business for private admissions consultants, most of them hired by relatively affluent families. (See "Independent Counsel," by Nicholas Confessore, page 135.)

Meanwhile, nearly every college official we spoke with told us how some other college was playing the market, usually by aggressively prospecting for new applicants, many or most of whom it would ultimately reject. In addition to making a college statistically more "selective," attracting a larger pool may enable schools to find students with higher test scores and less financial need. A number of colleges were described as using this "attract to reject" strategy, but one was mentioned by numerous interviewees: Washington University in St. Louis, which has gotten itself into the top ten in the *U.S. News* rankings—ahead of Columbia, Berkeley, the University of Chicago, and Brown—largely by attracting more and more applicants. Nanette Tarbouni,



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colleges and universities expressed concern that their institutions were letting the public down.

THE CHANGING ADMISSIONS PROCESS

One development in the year's admissions news was entirely positive: the beginning of the end of the early-decision nightmare. Over the past decade the rapid spread of "early" programs has advanced colleges' interests at the expense of students', and wealthier students' interests at the expense of everyone else's. The essence of the early-decision bargain was that colleges would give students a better chance of admission (usually while pretending not to do so) in return for the students' promise to enroll if accepted. This helped the colleges by locking in their class and improving their yield; and it helped those students who were absolutely sure by the end of their junior year what college was right for them. But it hurt many more students, by denying them a senior year's worth of consideration of where to attend; and it severely penalized students who required financial aid, because they were in no position to compare different schools' offers once they'd been accepted in a binding early program.

Last year's admissions cycle was the first to show a noticeable effect from what is known as "single-choice early action." Under its rules—which Harvard, Yale, and Stanford have now adopted—a student may apply to a college for "early action" and get an answer by December of his or her senior year. But—the crucial distinction—the program is not binding. If the student is admitted, he or she has until the normal May 1 deadline to compare admission and aid offers from other schools and decide which to accept. In exchange the student agrees to apply to only one school under any sort of early program. (If a college discovers that a student has sent multiple early applications, it can rescind admission or its financial-aid offer.)

Single-choice early action is a superior alternative to two other practices: the binding early programs that Stanford and Yale previously used (and that Princeton, Penn, and many other schools continue to use) and the nonbinding, non-exclusive early programs formerly available at Harvard (and still used at Georgetown, MIT, the University of Chicago, and others), which put no limit on how many early applications a student could file. This latter policy flooded the system with half-serious applications. The spread of

the single-choice early plan has already reduced the wild oversupply of applications to Harvard, which last year had 50 percent fewer early applicants than the year before. "Our sense is that students were targeting their early application to the college they most wanted, and were realistic about their likelihood of a match," says Marlyn McGrath Lewis, Harvard's director of undergraduate admissions. Meanwhile, Stanford had 62 percent and Yale 42 percent more early applicants after they jettisoned their binding programs. Many people express views similar to that offered by Andrew McNeill, of the Taft School: "Single-choice early action is the future."

The situation is murkier when it comes to the new version of the SAT. The students who started college this fall are the tail end of a fifty-year cohort that has taken the familiar SAT, with its oddball word-analogy questions and maximum score

of 1600. Over the years critics of the test have made obvious (and well-supported) objections to this version of the test: it can't measure certain kinds of intelligence; it effectively rewards high income and social standing; it is obviously "coachable"; and so on. But the SAT and its counterpart the ACT have continued to rise in importance, because standardized scores are the one way that admissions committees can measure applicants from different regions, schools, and backgrounds on some kind of common scale.

The complication is that this standard of comparison is now itself in flux. Starting in March, students will be able to take a new version of the SAT, which will be forty-five minutes longer and will have a maximum score of 2400 rather than 1600. The new test will eliminate the familiar "anthrax is to puppy as ..." analogies, add harder algebra questions, and include an essay question that students will have twenty-five minutes to answer. The resulting essays will be graded on an "objective" scale of 1 through 6, by thousands of separate readers who will purportedly apply consistent standards across the country.

This year's juniors, the high school class of 2006, in theory have the choice of taking either the old or the new SAT. (The classes of 2007 and onward will be offered only the new version.) As a practical matter, students aiming for selective colleges should be sure to take the new test, either by itself or in addition to the old. As Joan Bress, of College Resource Associates, in Worcester, Massachusetts, points out, "students submitting [only] the old SAT may



be perceived as trying to avoid the writing sample." But although that guidance is clear, it's impossible to predict how colleges will weigh the new SAT in the short term. A number of admissions officials said that they would look at the essay scores but planned to collect data about their predictive value for several years before giving them significant weight.

Another factor in the admissions process that evoked a surprisingly strong note of concern from college officials was the role played by athletics. "The treatment of athletes is the biggest uncovered scandal in admissions," says the dean of admissions at a selective college in the South. Cigus Vanni, of Cherry Hill West High School, in New Jersey, says, "Athletes simply take up too many spaces at competitive schools." Vanni and others are not referring to the traditional football and basketball powerhouse universities that are chronically put on probation by the NCAA. They are talking about the "best" schools. Harvard fields teams in forty-one Division I sports, Princeton in thirty-eight. "Those athletes don't just appear," says Princeton's dean of admission, Janet Lavin Rapelye, meaning that they are sought out and recruited. "Does it seem unfair to some parents? Perhaps. Are we making compromises? No."

Lloyd Thacker, of the Education Conservancy, in Portland, Oregon, says that the role of sports in Ivy League admissions is becoming widely noticed. "I think deans are trying to do a good job" (that is, are trying to admit only qualified athletes), he says. "I just think there are institutional pressures. Any real change has to come from presidents demonstrating leadership beyond their own institutional self-interest." (In the summer of 2003 the Ivy League presidents did raise academic standards for athletes and limit the number of recruits.) Tom Parker, of Amherst, thinks the first step toward addressing this problem—and the related one of "legacy" admissions—is to be completely honest about them. "Schools should come right out and say, 'We are practicing affirmative action. This is our admit rate for legacies. We reserve X places for athletes.' These people get in at the cost of academic standards, and it should be said, because everybody knows it. Pretending otherwise just engenders cynicism." In the meantime, though, prospective Ivy Leaguers might want to stay in shape.

THE FINANCIAL SQUEEZE

One prospect worried the people we interviewed more than any other. It was the financial pressures that together threaten to make four-year colleges, especially private ones, largely the preserve of the well-off—a reflection of social advancement rather than a means toward it.

The individual forces behind this shift are familiar: the polarization of incomes; the squeeze on state and federal support for higher education; the already high cost

of private education and the rapidly rising cost of public institutions. Another factor is the boom in "merit aid" programs at schools both public and private. Merit aid is financial assistance given for reasons other than financial need, and it is the fastest-growing category of financial aid. This is because merit aid helps colleges attract students with higher SAT scores, and from more-prosperous families, than might otherwise enroll. Steve Goodman, an independent educational consultant in Washington, D.C., offers the example of a student he was advising who was accepted by Syracuse. "The school threw six or seven thousand dollars at him that he didn't need," Goodman said. "They offered the money to be sure he would come." Michael Sexton, the dean of admissions at Lewis & Clark College, in Portland, Oregon, says that the use of merit aid depends mainly on where the institution stands "on the food chain" of colleges. "For those of us just below the upper echelon, it's one of the tools we can use [to attract top students]." Since overall aid budgets have been flat, more merit aid means less need-based aid at all but the very richest colleges.

Taken together, these and other forces have convinced many officials that America's four-year colleges, though more international and ethnically diverse than ever, are

Many officials are convinced that America's colleges, though more ethnically diverse than ever, are becoming less socio-economically diverse.

becoming less socio-economically diverse. "Low-income students are not participating at adequate rates," says John Latting, the director of admissions at Johns Hopkins. "There's some real talent, and they're not participating in the most prominent institutions at nearly the rates that a pure meritocracy would suggest." Latting points out that from a college's point of view, it is more convenient in every way to stick with well-prepared students who attended well-funded high schools and whose families can cover tuition without assistance. "Recruiting low-income students is expensive and requires you to take a hit in the apparent quality of your class," he says, because they generally have lower test scores. "But you have to be willing to do that, because so many things in the application process are biased toward standpoints and values ingrained in the upper class." Similar concerns were expressed time and again in our interviews. Richard Shaw, the dean of admissions and financial aid at Yale, described how the complexity of financial aid was another barrier to less well-off students, who are "having a hard time just taking the

first step to consider college.” The bad news, Shaw said, is that selective colleges are becoming economically stratified. “The good news is that it’s becoming a major topic.” This year Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard, announced that the university would waive all costs for students from families with an annual income below \$40,000. (Of course, such students would still have to get into Harvard in the first place.)

William Bowen, the president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and a former president of Princeton, has recently argued that selective universities have turned into “bastions of privilege” rather than “engines of opportunity,” because the whole process that leads students to different levels of education is so heavily biased against the poor. For instance, in families from the bottom 25 percent of the income distribution not even one third of students take the SAT. In families from the top 25 percent more than two thirds do. To help correct such disparities, Bowen has recommended not just need-blind admissions but “class-based affirmative action” to run alongside race-based programs. Indeed in a report last year for the Century Foundation,

The next surge in demand for college enrollment will begin in five or six years, will be as dramatic as the Baby Boom, and will be overwhelmingly Hispanic.

called “Socioeconomic Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Selective College Admissions,” Anthony Carnevale and Stephen Rose argued that elite-college admission was far more heavily skewed against low-income students than against racial minorities. “There are large numbers of students from families with low income and low levels of parental education who are academically prepared for bachelor’s degree attainment, even in the most selective colleges,” they wrote. “Their numbers are far larger than those who currently attend.” Carnevale and Rose estimated that as many as 300,000 low-income students now have the potential to succeed in four-year colleges but do not attend them.

Rod Skinner, the director of college counseling at Milton Academy, a private school outside Boston, says that the shift toward merit aid and away from need-based programs raises a moral question about ensuring access to higher education. “If you look at the trends nationally, those who really need the money are not getting it, and therefore we have a sort of aristocracy emerging in college admissions.” Cigus Vanni, of Cherry Hill, agrees, describing the phenomenon as “aristocratic socialism.” There is an atti-

tude, he says, of “this is my reward—I deserve it because I worked hard.”

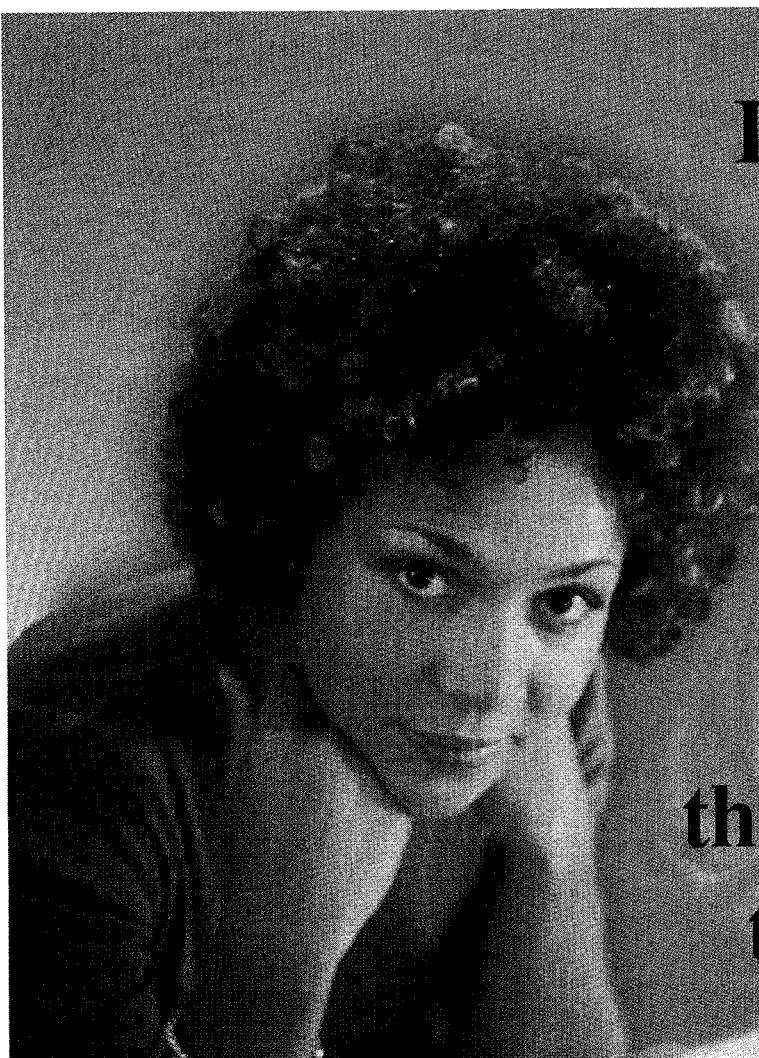
Tom Mortenson, a higher-education policy analyst in Oskaloosa, Iowa, points out that California’s college and university system was designed from the start to give students from every social class a reasonable chance at higher education. Its three-level network includes community colleges throughout the state, the California State University system above them, and the University of California campuses, with their highly selective admissions, at the top. The intention remains, but the system is now under financial stress from underfunding and overcrowding. Peter Osgood, the director of admissions at Harvey Mudd College, in Claremont, California, points out that spaces have been cut from the UC system, diverting students toward crowded community colleges. “We’re cutting things at a time when we should actually be physically building campuses,” he says. “We’re going to be in a world of hurt if we don’t act soon.”

COLLEGE AND AMERICA

People working in higher education aren’t in it for the money. They care about scholarship, they enjoy working with young people, they believe that what they do matters. That may be why so many of the people we spoke with volunteered that the higher-education system was evolving into something less and less connected to any kind of public good. “Universities don’t benefit society enough directly, on a day-to-day basis,” the consultant Steve Goodman says. “They’re supposed to serve the public interest, but they’ve become no different from insurance companies.”

This line of reasoning has several strands. One involves a simple loss of ambition on the part of universities and their leaders. Robert Zemsky, a professor of education at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote last year in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that “colleges and universities are seen principally as providing tickets to financial security and economic status,” rather than being involved in any larger public purpose. He noted that through the 1950s and 1960s many university presidents were leading public intellectuals. Agree with them or not, Clark Kerr, of Berkeley; Theodore Hesburgh, of Notre Dame; Kingman Brewster, of Yale; and others of their time played a larger role in public debates than almost any of their modern counterparts.

Many people expressed concern that colleges are not fully serving their own students, who often take on considerable debt or draw heavily on their parents’ savings in order to attend. “The amount of attention paid to undergraduates at the larger private and public research institutions is a national scandal,” says the admissions consultant Norman Puffett, who is also a dean at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, in Riverdale, New York, in a widely



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echoed sentiment. Outside the academy, discussion of higher education usually involves what happens before students begin their undergraduate education (that is, during the admissions process) and what happens after it's over (that is, whether their degrees help them get appropriate jobs). What happens in between is largely a mystery. Concern about these very expensive "lost years" has fueled the important "accountability" movement, which hopes to measure how well colleges actually perform when it comes to educating their students. The National Survey of Student Engagement, or NSSE, has been a pioneer in this area, with studies that measure how often students at a given college do the things that have proved to be associated with real learning: writing papers, speaking in class, interacting with professors, and so on. Since 1999 NSSE has been used at more than 850 colleges and universities. Similarly, a group called the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, based in San Jose, has produced innovative "Report Cards" every two years since 2000, judging each state's public and private higher education on its affordability, the graduation rate of students, the contribution the graduates make to public life, and other factors. A still more recent effort, the Collegiate Learning Assessment, hopes to measure how well individual colleges teach their students to think. (See "Measure by Measure," by Jay Mathews, page 134.)

Finally, in addition to the question of how well America's colleges and universities are serving their current students is the question of how well they will be able to serve those in the future. Many of our interviewees stressed a concern that few outside academia are aware of. It is that the next five or six years will see a big surge in demand for college enrollment, which will be as rapid and dramatic in some regions as the Baby Boom, and will be overwhelmingly Hispanic. The fastest growth in America's college-age population, in other words, will be in the group that has had the lowest college-attendance rate. One in seven Hispanic-Americans has a college degree, compared with one in two Asian-Americans, one in three white Americans, and one in five black Americans. This "participation gap" will pose an enormous challenge for higher education in the near future. "The stakes for serving this new population are very high," says Peter Osgood, of Harvey Mudd. "If we invest in education as a society, we will produce a better, richer society, a better-educated electorate, and we may help lower costs for health care." Or, if American colleges and universities cannot figure out how to serve this population, it may mean the reverse.

In sum, today's students are competing for places in a college system racked by debate about many of its basic values and practices—but more animated by questions of common good and public purpose than it has been in years. ■

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Who Needs Harvard?

The pressure on smart kids to get into top schools has never been higher. But the differences between these schools and the next tier down have never been smaller

BY GREGG EASTERBROOK

Today almost everyone seems to assume that the critical moment in young people's lives is finding out which colleges have accepted them. Winning admission to an elite school is imagined to be a golden passport to success; for bright students, failing to do so is seen as a major life setback. As a result, the fixation on getting into a super-selective college or university has never been greater. Parents' expectations that their children will attend top schools have "risen substantially" in the past decade, says Jim Conroy, the head of college counseling at New Trier High School, in Winnetka, Illinois. He adds, "Parents regularly tell me, 'I want whatever is highest-ranked.'" Shirley Levin, of Rockville, Maryland, who has worked as a college-admissions consultant for twenty-three years, concurs: "Never have stress levels for high school students been so high about where they get in, or about the idea that if you don't get into a glamour college, your life is somehow ruined."

Admissions mania focuses most intensely on what might be called the Gotta-Get-Ins, the colleges with maximum allure. The twenty-five Gotta-Get-Ins of the moment, according to admissions officers, are the Ivies (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, and Yale), plus Amherst, Berkeley, Caltech, Chicago, Duke, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Northwestern, Pomona, Smith, Stanford, Swarthmore, Vassar, Washington University in St. Louis, Wellesley, and Williams. Some students and their parents have always been obsessed with getting into the best colleges, of course. But as a result of rising population, rising affluence, and rising awareness of the value of education, *millions* of families are now in a state of nervous collapse regarding college admissions. Moreover, although the total number of college applicants keeps increasing, the number of freshman slots at the elite colleges has changed little. Thus competition for elite-college admission has grown ever more cutthroat. Each year more and more bright, qualified high school seniors don't receive the coveted thick envelope from a Gotta-Get-In.

But what if the basis for all this stress and disappointment—the idea that getting into an elite college makes a big difference in life—is wrong? What if it turns out that going to the "highest ranked" school hardly matters at all?

The researchers Alan Krueger and Stacy Berg Dale began investigating this question, and in 1999 produced a study that dropped a bomb on the notion of elite-college

attendance as essential to success later in life. Krueger, a Princeton economist, and Dale, affiliated with the Andrew Mellon Foundation, began by comparing students who entered Ivy League and similar schools in 1976 with students who entered less prestigious colleges the same year. They found, for instance, that by 1995 Yale graduates were earning 30 percent more than Tulane graduates, which seemed to support the assumption that attending an elite college smoothes one's path in life.

But maybe the kids who got into Yale were simply more talented or hardworking than those who got into Tulane. To adjust for this, Krueger and Dale studied what happened to students who were accepted at an Ivy or a similar institution, but chose instead to attend a less sexy, "moderately selective" school. It turned out that such students had, on average, the same income twenty years later as graduates of the elite colleges. Krueger and Dale found that for students bright enough to win admission to a top school, later income "varied little, no matter which type of college they attended." In other words, the student, not the school, was responsible for the success.

Research does find an unmistakable advantage to getting a bachelor's degree. In 2002, according to Census Bureau figures, the mean income of college graduates was almost double that of those holding only high school diplomas.

Trends in the knowledge-based economy suggest that college gets more valuable every year. For those graduating from high school today and in the near future, failure to attend at least some college may mean a McJobs existence for all but the most talented or unconventional.

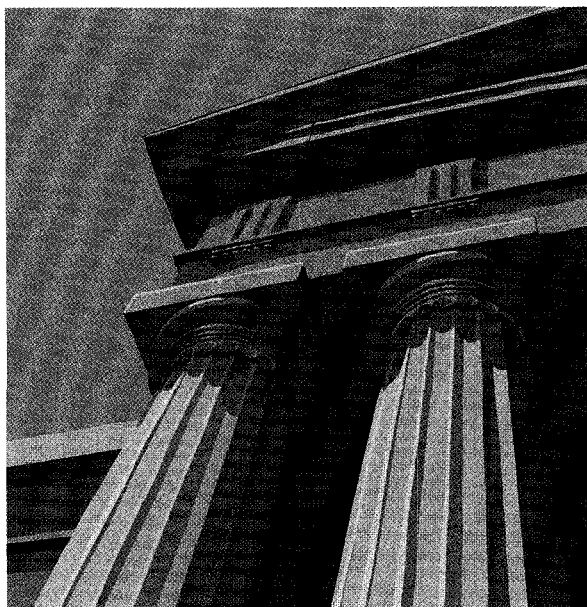
But, as Krueger has written, "*that* you go to college is more important than *where* you go." The advantages conferred by the most selective schools may be overstated. Consider how many schools are not in the top twenty-five, yet may be only slightly less good than the elites: Bard, Barnard, Bates, Bowdoin, Brandeis, Bryn Mawr, Bucknell, Carleton, Carnegie Mellon, Claremont McKenna, Colby, Colgate, Colorado College, Davidson, Denison, Dickinson, Emory, George Washington, Grinnell, Hamilton, Harvey Mudd, Haverford, Holy Cross, Kenyon, Lafayette, Macalester, Middlebury, Mount Holyoke, Notre Dame, Oberlin, Occidental, Reed, Rice, Sarah Lawrence, Skidmore, Spelman, St. John's of Annapolis, Trinity of Connecticut, Union, Vanderbilt, Washington and Lee, Wesleyan, Whit-

man, William and Mary, and the universities of Michigan and Virginia. Then consider the many other schools that may lack the *je ne sais quoi* of the top destinations but are nonetheless estimable, such as Boston College, Case Western, Georgia Tech, Rochester, SUNY-Binghamton, Texas Christian, Tufts, the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of California campuses at Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, and San Diego. (These lists are meant not to be exhaustive but merely to make the point that there are many, many good schools in America.) "Any family ought to be thrilled to have a child admitted to Madison, but parents obsessed with prestige would not consider Madison a win," says David Adamany, the president of Temple University. "The

child who is rejected at Harvard will probably go on to receive a superior education and have an outstanding college experience at any of dozens of other places, but start off feeling inadequate and burdened by the sense of disappointing his or her parents. Many parents now set their children up to consider themselves failures if they don't get the acceptance letter from a super-selective school."

Beyond the Krueger-Dale research, there is abundant anecdotal evidence that any of a wide range of colleges can equip its graduates for success.

Consider the United States Senate. This most exclusive of clubs currently lists twenty-six members with undergraduate degrees from the Gotta-Get-Ins—a disproportionately good showing considering the small percentage of students who graduate from these schools. But the diversity of Senate backgrounds is even more striking. Fully half of U.S. senators are graduates of public universities, and many went to "states"—among them Chico State, Colorado State, Iowa State, Kansas State, Louisiana State, Michigan State, North Carolina State, Ohio State, Oklahoma State, Oregon State, Penn State, San Jose State, South Dakota State, Utah State, and Washington State. Or consider the CEOs of the top ten Fortune 500 corporations: only four went to elite schools. H. Lee Scott Jr., of Wal-Mart, the world's largest corporation, is a graduate of Pittsburg State, in Pittsburg, Kansas. Or consider Rhodes scholars: this year only sixteen of the thirty-two American recipients hailed from elite colleges; the others attended Hobart, Millsaps, Morehouse, St. Olaf, the University of the South, Utah State, and Wake Forest, among other non-elites.



Steven Spielberg was rejected by the prestigious film schools at USC and UCLA; he attended Cal State Long Beach, and seems to have done all right for himself. Roger Straus, of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, one of the most influential people in postwar American letters, who died last spring at eighty-seven, was a graduate of the University of Missouri. "[Students] have been led to believe that if you go to X school, then Y will result, and this just isn't true," says Judith Shapiro, the president of Barnard. "It's good to attend a good college, but there are many good colleges. Getting into Princeton or Barnard just isn't a life-or-death matter."

That getting into Princeton isn't a life-or-death matter hit home years ago for Loren Pope, then the education editor of *The New York Times*. For his 1990 book, *Looking Beyond the Ivy League*, Pope scanned *Who's Who* entries of the 1980s, compiling figures on undergraduate degrees. (This was at a time when *Who's Who* was still the social directory of American distinction—before the marketing of *Who's Who in Southeastern Middle School Girls' Tennis* and innumerable other spinoffs.) Pope found that the

"There are a great many good colleges," says Judith Shapiro, the president of Barnard. "Getting into Princeton just isn't a life-or-death matter."

schools that produced the most *Who's Who* entrants were Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Chicago, and Caltech; that much conformed to expectations. But other colleges near the top in *Who's Who* productivity included DePauw, Holy Cross, Wabash, Washington and Lee, and Wheaton of Illinois. Pope found that Bowdoin, Denison, Franklin & Marshall, Millsaps, and the University of the South were better at producing *Who's Who* entrants than Georgetown or the University of Virginia, and that Beloit bested Duke.

These findings helped persuade Pope that the glamour schools were losing their status as the gatekeepers of accomplishment. Today Pope campaigns for a group of forty colleges that he considers nearly the equals of the elite, but more personal, more pleasant, less stress-inducing, and—in some cases, at least—less expensive. Institutions like Hope, Rhodes, and Ursinus do not inspire the same kind of admissions lust as the Ivies, but they are places where parents should feel very good about sending their kids. (A list of the well-regarded non-elite colleges Pope champions can be found at www.ctcl.com.)

The Gotta-Get-Ins can no longer claim to be the more or less exclusive gatekeepers to graduate school. Once, it was

assumed that an elite-college undergraduate degree was required for admission to a top law or medical program. No more: 61 percent of new students at Harvard Law School last year had received their bachelor's degrees outside the Ivy League. "Every year I have someone who went to Harvard College but can't get into Harvard Law, plus someone who went to the University of Maryland and does get into Harvard Law," Shirley Levin says. For *Looking Beyond the Ivy League*, Pope analyzed eight consecutive sets of scores on the medical-school aptitude test. Caltech produced the highest-scoring students, but Carleton outdid Harvard, Muhlenberg topped Dartmouth, and Ohio Wesleyan finished ahead of Berkeley.

The elites still lead in producing undergraduates who go on for doctorates (Caltech had the highest percentage during the 1990s), but Earlham, Grinnell, Kalamazoo, Kenyon, Knox, Lawrence, Macalester, Oberlin, and Wooster do better on this scale than many higher-status schools. In the 1990s little Earlham, with just 1,200 students, produced a higher percentage of graduates who have since received doctorates than did Brown, Dartmouth, Duke, Northwestern, Penn, or Vassar.

That non-elite schools do well in *Who's Who* and in sending students on to graduate school or to the Senate suggests that many overestimate the impact of the Gotta-Get-Ins not only on future earnings but on interesting career paths as well. For example, I graduated from Colorado College, a small liberal arts institution that is admired but, needless to say, is no Stanford. While I was there, in the mid-1970s, wandering around the campus were disheveled kids whose names have since become linked with an array of achievements: Neal Baer, M.D., an executive producer for the NBC show *ER*; Frank Bowman, a former federal prosecutor often quoted as the leading specialist on federal sentencing guidelines; Katharine DeShaw, the director of fundraising for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; David Hendrickson, the chairman of the political-science department at Colorado College; Richard Kilbride, the managing director of ING Asset Management, which administers about \$450 billion; Robert Krimmer, a television actor; Margaret Liu, M.D., a senior adviser to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and one of the world's foremost authorities on vaccines; David Malpass, the chief economist for Bear Stearns; Mark McConnell, an animator who has won Emmys for television graphics; Jim McDowell, the vice-president of marketing for BMW North America; Marcia McNutt, the CEO of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute; Michael Nava, the author of the Henry Rios detective novels; Peter Neupert, the CEO of Drugstore.com; Anne Reifenberg, the deputy business editor of the *Los Angeles Times*; Deborah Caulfield Rybak, a co-author of an acclaimed book about tobacco litigation; Ken Salazar, the attorney general of Colorado and a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2004; Thom Shanker, the Pentagon correspondent for *The New*

FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

There are a lot of people out there – professors, nurses, deans, hospital and university administrators, doctors, coaches, curators and others like them – whose career choices inherently add value to our culture. Regardless of whether they see it this way or not. Take teaching, for example. Not only is it rewarding for the teacher on a personal level, it is beneficial for society on a universal one. Sure, there are richer career paths these people could walk in life, but perhaps none as worthwhile. For them and what they do, we think a reward is in order. One equal to the contributions they make to the rest of us.

At TIAA-CREF, that is our sole reason for being. For over 85 years, we have been helping to ensure the long-term financial well-being of the millions of people working in the academic, medical and cultural fields. People whose life work advances the greater good.

With our nonprofit heritage, TIAA-CREF has long subscribed to a different set of guiding principles. Principles directly influenced by the people we serve. With over 300 billion dollars in combined assets, our approach to investing goes beyond sound portfolio management. We are mindful of our social responsibilities and have a long history of championing corporate governance. And our employees do not work on commission. We stay focused on the best interests of our participants. They come first. The mission we embarked on over 85 years ago still rings true today – serve those who serve the rest of us. Because for all the good they send our way, we think, some good deserves to come theirs.

The logo consists of a stylized square graphic with a white border. Inside the square, the words "TIAA" and "CREF" are stacked vertically in a bold, sans-serif font.

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FINANCIAL SERVICES

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York Times; Joe Simitian, named to the 2003 *Scientific American* list of the fifty most influential people in technology; and Eric Sondermann, the founder of one of Denver's top public-relations firms.

In terms of students who went on to interesting or prominent lives, Colorado College may have done just as well in this period as Columbia or Cornell or any other Gotta-Get-In destination. Doubtless other colleges could make the same claim for themselves for this or other periods; I'm simply citing the example I know personally. The point is that for some time the center of gravity for achievement has been shifting away from the topmost colleges.

Fundamental to that shift has been a steady improvement in the educational quality of non-elite schools. Many college officials I interviewed said approximately the same thing: that a generation or two ago it really was a setback if a top student didn't get admitted to an Ivy or one of a few other elite destinations, because only a small number of places were offering a truly first-rate education. But since then the non-elites have improved dramatically.

A generation or two ago it really was a setback if a top student didn't get admitted to an elite school. But since then non-elites have improved dramatically.

"Illinois Wesleyan is a significantly better college than it was in the 1950s," says Janet McNew, the school's provost, "whereas Harvard has probably changed much less dramatically in the past half century." That statement could apply to many other colleges. Pretty good schools of the past have gotten much better, while the great schools have remained more or less the same. The result is that numerous colleges have narrowed the gap with the elites.

How many colleges now provide an excellent education? Possibly a hundred, suggests Jim Conroy, of New Trier; probably more than two hundred, Shirley Levin says. The improvement is especially noteworthy at large public universities. Michigan and Virginia have become "public Ivies," and numerous state-run universities now offer a top-flight education. Whether or not students take a public university up on its offer of a good education is another matter: large, chaotic campuses may create an environment in which it's possible to slide by with four years of drinking beer and playing video games, whereas small private colleges usually notice students who try this. Yet the rising quality of public universities is important, because these schools provide

substantial numbers of slots, often with discounted in-state tuition. Many families who cannot afford private colleges now have appealing alternatives at public universities.

One reason so many colleges have improved is the profusion of able faculty members. The education wave fostered by the GI Bill drew many talented people into academia. Because tenured openings at the glamour schools are subject to slow turnover, this legion of new teachers fanned out to other colleges, raising the quality of instruction at non-elite schools. While this was happening, the country became more prosperous, and giving to colleges—including those below the glamour level—shot up. When the first GI Bill cohort began to die, big gifts started flowing to the non-elites. (Earlier this year one graduate bequeathed Pitt's law school \$4.25 million.) Today many non-elite schools have significant financial resources: Emory has an endowment of \$4.5 billion, Case Western an endowment of \$1.4 billion, and even little Colby an endowment of \$323 million—an amount that a few decades ago would have seemed unimaginable for a small liberal arts school without a national profile.

As colleges below the top were improving, the old WASP insider system was losing its grip on business and other institutions. There was a time when an Ivy League diploma was vital to career advancement in many places, because an Ivy grad could be assumed to be from the correct upper-middle-class Protestant background. Today an Ivy diploma reveals nothing about a person's background, and favoritism in hiring and promotion is on the decline; most businesses would rather have a Lehigh graduate who performs at a high level than a Brown graduate who doesn't. Law firms do remain exceptionally status-conscious—some college counselors believe that law firms still hire associates based partly on where they were undergraduates. But the majority of employers aren't looking for status degrees, and some may even avoid candidates from the top schools, on the theory that such aspirants have unrealistic expectations of quick promotion.

Relationships labeled ironic are often merely coincidental. But it is genuinely ironic that as non-elite colleges have improved in educational quality and financial resources, and favoritism toward top-school degrees has faded, getting into an elite school has nonetheless become more of a national obsession.

Which brings us back to the Krueger-Dale thesis. Can we really be sure Hamilton is nearly as good as Harvard?

Some analysts maintain that there are indeed significant advantages to the most selective schools. For instance, a study by Caroline Hoxby, a Harvard economist who has researched college outcomes, suggests that graduates of elite schools do earn more than those of comparable ability who attended other colleges. Hoxby studied male students who entered college in 1982, and adjusted for aptitude, though she used criteria different from those employed

by Krueger and Dale. She projected that among students of similar aptitude, those who attended the most selective colleges would earn an average of \$2.9 million during their careers; those who attended the next most selective colleges would earn \$2.8 million; and those who attended all other colleges would average \$2.5 million. This helped convince Hoxby that top applicants should, in fact, lust after the most exclusive possibilities.

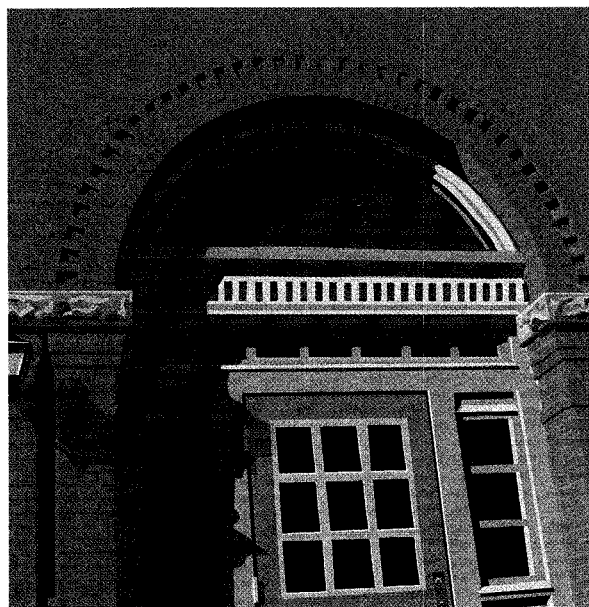
"There's a clear benefit to the top fifty or so colleges," she says. "Connections made at the top schools matter. It's not so much that you meet the son of a wealthy banker and his father offers you a job, but that you meet specialists and experts who are on campus for conferences and speeches. The conference networking scene is much better at the elite universities." Hoxby estimates that about three quarters of the educational benefit a student receives is determined by his or her effort and abilities, and should be more or less the same at any good college. The remaining quarter, she thinks, is determined by the status of the school—higher-status schools have more resources and better networking opportunities, and surround top students with other top students.

"Today there are large numbers of colleges with good faculty, so faculty probably isn't the explanation for the advantage at the top," Hoxby says. "Probably there is not much difference between the quality of the faculty at Princeton and at Rutgers. But there's a lot of difference between the students at those places, and some of every person's education comes from interaction with other students." Being in a super-competitive environment may cause a few students to have nervous breakdowns, but many do their best work under pressure, and the contest is keenest at the Gotta-Get-Ins. Hoxby notes that some medium-rated public universities have established internal "honors colleges" to attract top performers who might qualify for the best destinations. "Students at honors colleges in the public universities do okay, but not as well as they would do at the elite schools," Hoxby argues. The reason, she feels, is that they're not surrounded by other top-performing students.

There is one group of students that even Krueger and Dale found benefited significantly from attending elite schools: those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Kids from poor families seem to profit from exposure to Amherst or Northwestern much more than kids from well-off families. Why? One possible answer is that they learn sociological cues

and customs to which they have not been exposed before. In his 2003 book, *Limbo*, Alfred Lubrano, the son of a bricklayer, analyzed what happens when people from working-class backgrounds enter the white-collar culture. Part of their socialization, Lubrano wrote, is learning to act dispassionate and outwardly composed at all times, regardless of how they might feel inside. Students from well-off communities generally arrive at college already trained to masquerade as calm. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may benefit from exposure to this way of carrying oneself—a trait that may be particularly in evidence at the top colleges.

It's understandable that so many high schoolers and their nervous parents are preoccupied with the idea of getting into an elite college. The teen years are a series of tests: of scholastic success, of fitting in, of prowess at throwing and catching balls, of skill at pleasing adults. These tests seem to culminate in a be-all-and-end-all judgment about the first eighteen years of a person's life, and that judgment is made by college admissions officers. The day college acceptance letters arrive is to teens the moment of truth: they learn what the adult world really thinks of them, and receive an omen of whether or not their lives will be successful. Of course, grown-up land is full of Yale graduates who are unhappy failures and Georgia Tech



grads who run big organizations or have a great sense of well-being. But teens can't be expected to understand this. All they can be sure of is that colleges will accept or reject them, and it's like being accepted or rejected for a date—only much more intense, and their parents know all the details.

Surely it is impossible to do away with the trials of the college-application process altogether. But college admissions would be less nerve-racking, and hang less ominously over the high school years, if it were better understood that a large number of colleges and universities can now provide students with an excellent education, sending them onward to healthy incomes and appealing careers. Harvard is marvelous, but you don't have to go there to get your foot in the door of life. ▀

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MEASURE BY MEASURE

A new effort to determine how well schools teach

Almost since *U.S. News & World Report* began publishing its list of "America's Best Colleges," in 1983, there have been complaints within academia that the magazine's rankings are distorted—that they largely measure how selective a school is, rather than how good an education it offers—and that they have undue influence among college-bound students and their families. Seven years ago Richard H. Hersh, then the president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, tried to do something about it. At the annual meeting of the Annapolis Group, an organization of liberal arts colleges, Hersh proposed a radical idea to his fellow college presidents: "Why don't we just stop supplying them with our data?"

That particular plan went nowhere, but Hersh refused to relent. Leaving Hobart and William Smith in 1999, he set up shop in his white clapboard house in Hamden, Connecticut, and devoted himself to the question of how colleges could truly measure how much their students learned.

American higher education has been trying to answer this question for decades. One of the most recent efforts has been the National Survey of Student Engagement, launched in 1999. (See "What Makes a College Good?" by Nicholas Confessore, November 2003 *Atlantic*.) Used by more than 850 colleges and universities, the NSSE (pronounced "nessie") polls undergraduates on their collegiate experiences: what they think they gained from their classes, how much interaction they had with professors, and so forth. But Hersh wanted to go beyond this, to find a way of determining not just the conditions students learned under but *how much* they actually learned. When he discovered that Roger Benjamin, the president of the RAND Corporation's Council for Aid to Education, was looking at the same question, the two men put together a research group, based in New York City, with about a dozen employees and outside advisers. In 2002 the organization unveiled the fruit of its labors: a three-hour test called the Collegiate Learning Assessment, or CLA.

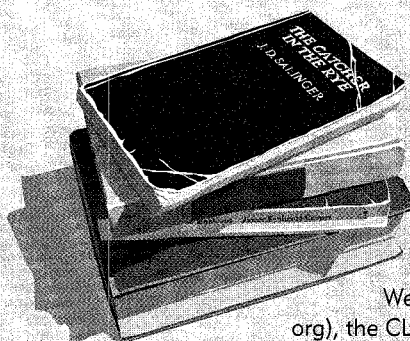
The purpose of the test is to measure not the particular facts students have memorized but, rather, how well they have learned to *think*. To accomplish this the CLA group settled on a written examination with two principal sections: one is made up of two essays, one arguing a point of view on a particular subject and the other critiquing an existing argument; another consists of a longer, "critical thinking" essay. A sample set of instructions for the latter began,

You are the assistant to Pat Williams, the president of DynaTech, a company that makes precision electronic instruments and navigational equipment. Sally Evans, a member of DynaTech's sales force, recommended that DynaTech buy a small private plane (a SwiftAir 235) that she and other members of the sales force could use to visit customers. Pat was about to approve the purchase when there was an accident involving a SwiftAir 235.

The test taker was given newspaper articles about the accident, a federal report on small-plane in-flight break-ups, charts on the performance of the SwiftAir 235, and a memo from Pat asking for recommendations on how to proceed. The instructions continued,

Please prepare a memo that addresses the questions in Pat's memo to you. Be sure to describe the data that support or refute the claim that the type of wing on the SwiftAir 235 leads to more in-flight breakups, as well as the factors that may have contributed to the accident and should be taken into account. Please also make an overall recommendation about whether DynaTech should purchase the plane and cite your reasons for this conclusion.

For the initial trials of the CLA, in 2002, fourteen unidentified colleges of various sizes supplied 1,365 student test takers who had been lured with payments of \$20 to \$25 an hour. In a



series of reports available on the Council for Aid to Education

Web site (www.cae.org), the CLA researchers

say the test worked. College seniors had significantly higher CLA scores than freshmen with comparable SAT scores, suggesting that something that improved with college teaching had been measured; some colleges with similar SAT averages had significantly different CLA averages, suggesting that the results had something to do with the nature of education at the school. So far about fifty colleges and universities are planning to take the test this fall; the group hopes to get that number up to eighty by next spring.

The fact that the CLA shows some colleges doing better than others is, educators say, both encouraging and dangerous. CLA officials frown at the thought of ranking schools the way *U.S. News* does, even though they consider their criteria more compelling. For the moment the CLA is providing results only to the individual colleges and universities, for internal use. For example, the schools can use the results to determine how much students benefited from particular school policies. If a school could show that students' scores increased markedly during their time within its walls, it might even use the data to assist in recruiting or fundraising.

Once the CLA begins to show how much students are really learning, there may be one more job for it to do. A little paragraph tossed off at the end of a technical review of the data says that CLA scores correlated more strongly with college grades than did SAT scores. If the CLA proves successful, it's not out of the question that it could be administered to high school students and perhaps even begin to replace the SAT. If it does, you can be sure that test-preparation companies will be quick to figure out how much they can charge for ten weeks of lessons on writing Pat a dynamite memo about the company plane. —JAY MATHEWS

Independent Counsel

For private admissions consultants business is booming. But is their expensive expertise worth the cost?

BY NICHOLAS CONFESSORE

It was around the time Rob Strain realized some of his teachers were confusing the University of Pennsylvania with Penn State that he decided he might need outside help with his college applications. A three-sport athlete with high SATs and a 4.0 average, Strain was by no means a weak candidate for admission to an Ivy League school. As a junior at Poolesville High, in an affluent Maryland exurb an hour away from Washington, D.C., he served on the student government, wrote a bit for the school's literary magazine, and was on his way to becoming editor of the school newspaper. But Strain, who spent his sophomore year at St. James, a nearby boarding school, says, "I was used to having someone specifically worried about *my* college process and the schools I was looking at. There wasn't really the mentality at Poolesville of sending kids to top schools." His parents, though well-off and college-educated, were new to the frenzied quest for admission to elite universities. And so, much as a Western businessman flying into Karachi might obtain the services of a fixer to avoid getting shaken down at the airport, Strain and his family began looking for a guide. "If I was getting into something that serious," he says gravely, "I would need someone who kind of knew that world."

That someone was Steve Goodman, an independent college consultant based in Washington. Strain made his first visit to Goodman's office, on a leafy street in the Van Ness neighborhood, at the start of his junior year, and shortly thereafter signed on as a client. For the next year or so Strain made the trip down from Poolesville once every four or five weeks, meeting with Goodman to discuss everything from which schools to visit to what his essay topics should be. "My job is to help students translate their lives into a coherent message that colleges that work for them will then respond to," Goodman told me recently. "A very large proportion of them apply to and get into selective schools."

Strain did too. Last December he received word that the University of Pennsylvania had accepted him early admission, and he started there this fall. He thinks Goodman probably deserves some of the credit. "Our first meeting with him," Strain recalls, "my dad asked him, 'How are we going to know if you helped us or not?' And he said, 'You're not going to.' And that's how I feel about it—maybe I could have gotten in anyway, but I sure wouldn't want to go back and take the chance."

Admissions consultants like Goodman have been around, in one form or another, for decades, serving chiefly people of some means. (Goodman charges anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for his help.) But over the past ten years the private counseling business has grown dramatically, and its focus has shifted. Where independent college counselors once served mainly "special needs" cases—kids doing poorly in school or suffering from learning disabilities or other handicaps—they now cater increasingly to kids like Strain, who are already winners in the educational race.

"The biggest irony is that the people who are employing these folks are the people who need them least," says Tom Parker, the dean of admissions and financial aid at Amherst College. Such people tend to have strong grade-point averages, high test scores, and a catalogue of enriching summer experiences; their high schools probably have pretty good in-house college counseling. It's precisely among such high achievers, however, that the perceived consequences of not getting into a top-notch school are bleakest, leading a growing number to conclude that the college-applications process is too risky for amateurs. "I had a mother who called

Where independent counselors once served mainly "special needs" cases, they now cater increasingly to kids who are already winners in the educational race.

me and said, 'I don't like this process, but if everyone else is getting a leg up, I don't want to fall behind,'" Goodman says. "It is true that you don't need an accountant to do your taxes. It is true that when you go to court, you don't need a lawyer. But the vast majority of Americans conclude that there is an expertise that an accountant or a lawyer has to help them with the process. And an increasing percentage of Americans are coming to the conclusion that they want the expertise of a certified education planner to help guide them through the process."

The transformation of independent counseling seems to have started during the early 1990s. By then the old feeder-school system that shuttled affluent denizens of northeastern private schools to elite colleges had broken down and been replaced by a scramble for "the national student"—the historian Robert Zernsky's term for meritocrats hailing from competitive public and private high schools all across the country. The emergence of college rankings had strengthened the prestige of a few dozen top schools, inducing growing numbers of high school seniors

to apply and ratcheting up the pressure on those who once could have expected admission as a matter of course. The rapid growth of test prep, now approaching ubiquity among applicants to selective colleges, was one response. Independent consulting was another.

One day last summer I paid a visit to the Upper East Side office of Frank Leana, a well-known New York-based consultant. Though he's had his own shop for only five years, Leana spent two decades working inside schools, chiefly at Manhattan's Trinity High School, where he was first an English teacher and then the director of college admissions. (Many independent consultants come from high school counseling or college admissions.) Unlike some newer entrants to the field, Leana doesn't believe in contacting admissions offices directly—he sometimes makes an exception for pro bono or foreign clients—and during our interview he never mentioned which schools his clients have gotten into. "I see myself as a counselor who is advising about the process, not advocating with admissions people," he explained. He is studiously self-effacing about his role, and—withstanding a marked resemblance to Dick Cheney—retains the soothing voice and low-key manner of someone who spends a lot of time talking to adolescents. (Differing with me on a point, he'd say pleasantly, "I'm not agreeing with that, Nick.")

Like the older breed of independent consultants, Leana still gets referrals from headmasters, psychiatrists, and therapists—people who "meet someone who is on the wrong track," he said. "They can't help them, and they'll send them to me." But over the years he's noticed that more and more of his clients are what he describes as "clear-cut, very strong" students, many of them demographically advantaged kids who feel overburdened by the expectations of their families and peers. "I dislike the perception that if you have money and are privileged, you don't need help," Leana said. He gestured toward the waiting room outside his door. "If you need help, you should get help."

Leana provides consultation by the hour, but he prefers to have long-term relationships with clients. "We don't do a lot of piecemeal services," he said, "because then you're doing triage, and I want to do counseling." For about \$5,500 Leana provides unlimited help—whatever time is needed "to get the job done." He works with students in a cozy, quiet office with beige walls and a comfortable couch

with cityscape views. Like many consultants, he asks new clients and their parents to fill out lengthy questionnaires before coming in for an evaluation. "You want to get a sense of a student's accomplishments, credentials, goals, issues, needs."

Over the next year or two Leana sees them fifteen or so times. Earlier sessions focus on which schools to apply to. If necessary, Leana will gently push parents away from their Harvard fantasies, and try to broaden their horizons beyond the *U.S. News* rankings. Once he learns what his clients are interested in, he may steer them toward specific summer activities or internships. "The cynics will say that you're just trying to pad your résumé for college," he admitted. "But the educator can say, 'Hey, if you do some of these things, regardless of what might motivate you, you're going to have a better high school experience.'" As deadlines near, Leana

conducts mock interviews, serves as an extra set of eyes on applications, and provides a sounding board for essays, the writing of which—as anyone who has ever applied to college knows—can be awkward and torturous for even the most confident kid.

It's fair to look at all this and wonder how it differs from what high school counselors do, or are supposed to do. The differences are of degree, not kind. Leana sees fewer students—about seventy-five a year, compared with about 250 for counselors at private schools and

perhaps twice that for counselors at public schools. As a result, he can focus more attention on each student; he also has the time to amass a wider array of contacts and information than most school-based advisers, who may have smaller travel budgets and responsibilities other than counseling. Leana goes to a lot of conferences, meets a lot of admissions officers, and visits a lot of campuses. In theory that makes him more adept at matching kids with suitable schools and—when it comes time to mold clients' applications—positioning them to get in.

"A really respectable educational consultant is filling a void in terms of information regarding the process," says Howard Greene, a veteran independent consultant and a former associate dean of admissions at Princeton who is widely referred to as the "granddaddy" of the trade. "We enjoy the luxury of being able to spend twenty-four-seven focused on this very complex process of educational planning. It's what the high school counselors would like to do for families if they had the ideal environment."



There's little evidence, though, that the growth in independent consulting has been driven by kids who are poorly served by their high school counselors. To begin with, most clients are at least reasonably well off. (According to the Independent Educational Consultants Association, fees average around \$2,650 for ten to fifteen hours' worth of visits, and more than 70 percent of clients have family incomes over \$75,000.) And they tend to be enrolled in schools whose counselors have reasonable workloads. Nor is applying to college appreciably more complicated now than it was two decades ago.

What has changed—aside from the degree of hysteria among parents—is the college-admissions calculus itself. One factor is the significant grade inflation that began to afflict American high schools during the late 1980s, and took a sharp turn for the worse throughout the 1990s. From 1987 to 2002, according to the College Board, the share of college-bound seniors with high school averages in the A range rose from 28 percent to 41 percent. Significantly, the greatest inflation occurred among advantaged groups such as whites, suburbanites, and students at private schools, rather than among disadvantaged groups where there was more room for improvement. Grade inflation is said to be particularly acute at schools where college mania is worst, as parents and administrators put more pressure on teachers to avoid “sabotaging” kids’ chances with low grades. A second factor is the 1995 “recentering” of the SAT—essentially a rejiggering of the curve to bring up average scores after a decades-long decline. In addition to raising the average, recentering shrank the gap in scores between candidates at the top of the elite-college applicant pool. The year before the recentering, for instance, Georgetown had about a hundred candidates with verbal scores of 750 or above. The year after, that number shot up to about 1,250. As test prep became de rigueur for those applying to selective schools, applicants’ scores bunched up even further; today Georgetown has roughly 2,200 candidates each year with verbal scores above 750.

As a growing number of applicants have gotten top scores on these “hard” portions of the college application, admissions officers at selective schools have been forced to rely more on “soft” measures, such as teacher recommendations, the perceived difficulty of the student’s curriculum, excellence in extracurricular activities, and, most important, the college essay. “It’s kind of like what happened to the dollar when it went off the gold standard—it just floated,” says Bruce Poch, the vice-president and dean of admissions at Pomona. “So we’ve lost some of our frame of reference at the most selective places, and are therefore spending more time on the more subtle stuff.” These, of course, are the parts of the application on which consultants can have the most influence. Just as families came to see SAT preparation as a way to nudge up scores on the hard measures, they are coming to see consultants as a way of improving their kids’ performance on the soft measures.

Inevitably, this perception has resulted in another significant change in the college consulting business: students are approaching independent counselors in earlier grades. Though the vast majority of kids who work with counselors still start at the end of tenth grade or the beginning of eleventh, all the consultants I spoke with said that more and more families are seeking help earlier. “If they come to you too late, you can’t do as much,” Leana says. A student entering her senior year, consultants point out, can’t go back in time to add more Advanced Placement courses to her transcript or apply for an internship at a bank instead of spending the summer at the beach. And as colleges have demanded evidence of “leadership” and “impact” (awards won, official positions held in clubs and on teams), the threshold of the college-admissions process has been pushed further back, to sophomore or freshman year. “What I love is when kids come who are ninth-graders, eighth-graders, for what I call an educational planning session,” Leana says. “And that’s not about getting into college. That’s about looking ahead at high school and saying, ‘All right, what can I get out of this, how can I get that out of this, what are some interests I can develop?’”

Once a trade with just a handful of practitioners, independent counseling now encompasses boutique practices and large firms, old hands and brash upstarts.

Like any other maturing industry, private admissions counseling has begun to diversify. Once a trade with just a handful of practitioners, it now encompasses boutique practices and large firms, old hands and brash upstarts, generalists and specialists. There are Web sites, including EssayEdge, which promises to have your application essay looked over by “Harvard-Educated Editors”; companies that run tours of college campuses; and even summer camps where kids spend a few weeks writing their applications and burnishing their interview skills. Demand continues to bring consultants into the field: retired teachers, former high school counselors or college admissions officers, even parents who got a few of their own kids into top schools and decided to hang out a shingle. “There’s extraordinary unevenness,” Tom Parker, of Amherst, says, “from people who are literally giving students bad advice and faulty advice—particularly when it comes to financial aid—to people who are really quite good, who understand the process, who aren’t trying to hoodwink us, who want to provide kids with a reasonable service.”

Not surprisingly, increased competition has spurred

a dash for credentials. "The field of independent counseling is in an unprecedented period of growth," says Mark Sklarow, the executive director of the IECA, whose membership has grown by a third in just the past two years. "We get a hundred applications for membership a month." The National Association for College Admission Counseling—traditionally a membership group for college admissions officers and school-based counselors—now has twice as many independents on its roster as it did a decade ago. UCLA's extension school began offering a certificate in college counseling in 1993, with about a hundred enrollees. This year it has more than six times that number.

There's a fair bit of sniping between established consultants and newer entrants, who tend to see college counseling less as a calling and more as the booming business it has clearly become. On the same day that I met with Frank Leana, I paid a visit to Katherine Cohen, the founder of the consulting firm IvyWise and another top pick among wealthy families. A couple of years ago Cohen was the subject of a cover story in *New York* magazine, which dubbed her "The \$28,995 Tutor"—for what at the time was her

peers (before founding IvyWise, she worked as a private academic tutor, received a certificate in college-admissions counseling from UCLA, and served as a first reader in Yale's admissions office), was not that different from the other consultants I spoke with. What is unique about her is the extent to which she has embraced counseling's shift from a somewhat informal extension of the high school guidance office to a profitable business in which people of means expect to need expert advice and near-industrial-scale regimentation. In Cohen's hands, applying to college looks a little like deploying a brigade to Iraq: her clients get personalized color-coded binders an inch and a half thick, bursting with checklists, schedules, deadlines, information on internships and prizes, and assignments designed to familiarize kids with the colleges they think they want to go to. "Doing *this* with one of our counselors"—she gestured to a binder—"it's been shown, through our past statistics, will give you an edge. Absolutely, they will have an advantage. Mainly, though, it's because they're going to put work into it, and they're going to work with us to become the best them that they can be. We are guiding them. In a lot of ways, I feel like we're more life coaches."

There is, of course, that price tag. When asked how much her services cost, Cohen seemed eager to set the record straight. She explained that her top rate—now \$32,995—is only for the deluxe "junior/senior platinum package," involving more than a hundred hours of work ("So if you break it down hourly, you're looking at about three hundred dollars an hour"—well within the typical range for top consultants). She then had her assistant print out a brochure showing the many "a la carte" services IvyWise counselors offer in the three- and four-figure range. She also let me know that a third of her clients are pro bono cases, and argued that "educators *across* the board should be getting paid more money."

After several minutes of this Cohen paused for a moment. "You know what the right price to charge is?" she finally asked. I shook my head no, expecting some lofty defense of pedagogical principle. "The right price to charge," she told me, "is what the *market* will bear."

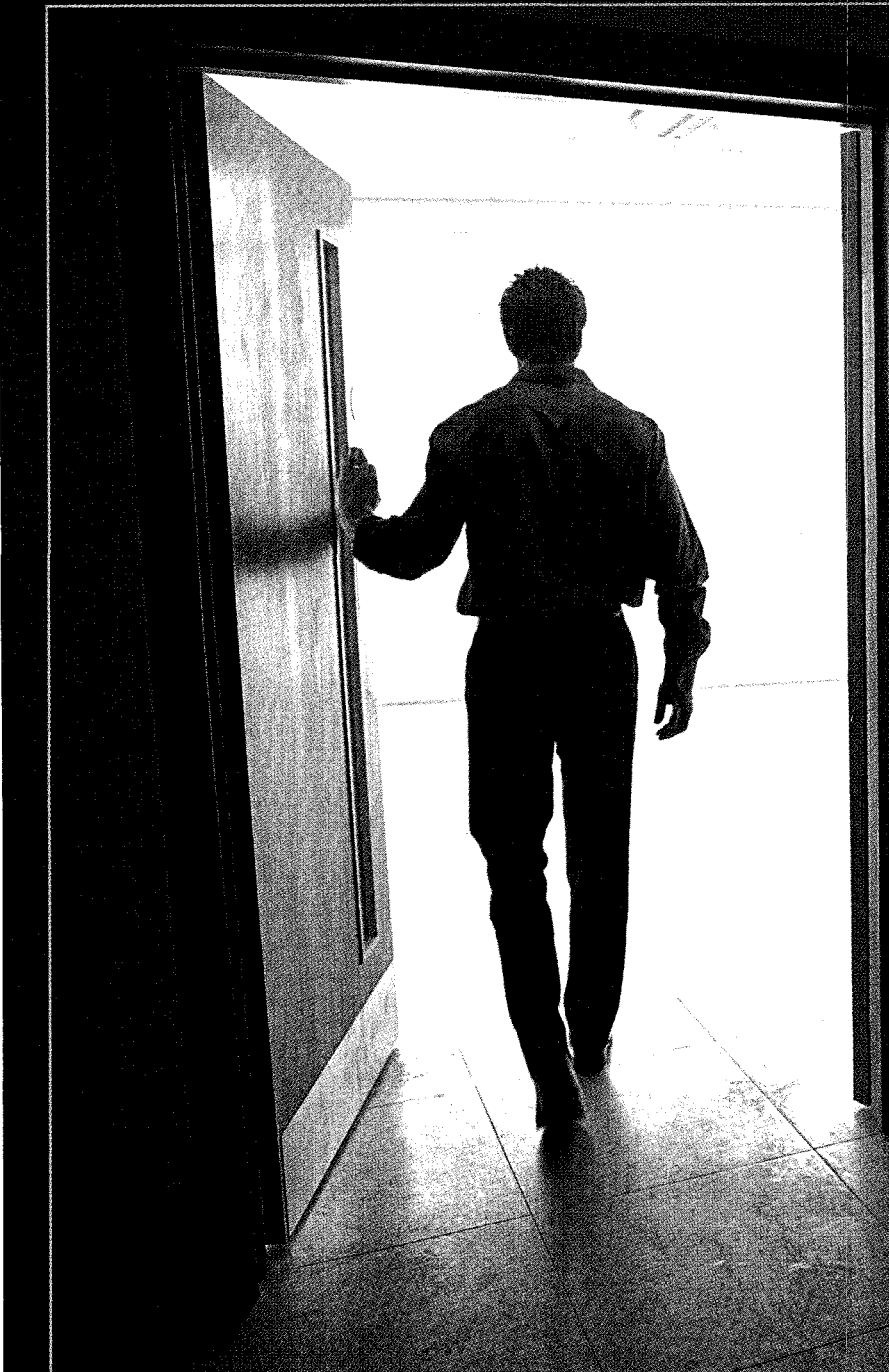
But even as private consultants position themselves as necessary guides through the college-admissions process, they are provoking a backlash from the very gatekeepers they're paid to finesse. In June I visited Charles Deacon, the dean of admissions at Georgetown University. We sat in a large, spare conference room where just a few months earlier Deacon and his admissions staff had winnowed some 15,000 applications down to a freshman class of about 1,500. Like many people involved in admissions work, Deacon has a kindly, paternal aspect. But he is known in the business as something of a hardliner—a fierce critic of practices that have fed what he calls, with a wave of his hand, the "craziness" of college admissions.

Most admissions officers say that for talented kids extra college counseling is usually superfluous—and in some cases can actually hurt their chances.

maximum rate for a two-year comprehensive counseling package. In a field where personalities tend toward the fusty and professorial, Cohen is a stylish thirtysomething blonde with a husky voice and a well-kept manicure. She's also unabashedly self-promoting: about fifteen seconds into our interview she bragged, unprompted, that this year "eighty-five percent of our kids got into their number-one-choice dream school, and a hundred percent of the kids overall got into their first- or second-choice school."

Cohen got a lot of flak—and also plenty of clients—after the *New York* story came out, and some point to her as an example of all that has gone wrong in the world of counseling. (Bruce Poch described her as "a really great snake-oil salesman.") And it's true that although Cohen has mastered the therapeutic patois of her field—"We take a look at what [students'] needs are and what their personal and educational goals are, and then we come up with a plan for them," she explained to me—she is at heart a saleswoman. She doesn't talk about counseling; she talks about "the IvyWise process."

But on closer inspection it seemed to me that Cohen, though less well credentialed than her more established



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Most admissions officers at selective schools say they won't discuss individual cases with independent counselors; Deacon takes no calls from them, period. "We simply don't work with private counselors," he told me. "There is no question that a private counselor is the hired hand of the family to get the kid an advantage." Deacon says he doesn't mind counselors who help kids pick out the right school, or guide people who are new to elite-college admissions through the process. (Everybody seems to agree, for example, that students applying from outside the United States usually need independent counseling.) But he's sour about what the field is becoming. "What you have is a vulnerability out there, and it really isn't lack of counseling—it's the need to buy any edge you can buy. People will pay tens of thousands of dollars a year to some individual if they believe it's going to pay off. And why do they think it's going to pay off? Presumably, this independent counselor is able to say, 'Here's where my kids get into school.'"

Exactly what counselors *do* promise—explicitly or implicitly—is, of course, part of the delicate dance of the profession. There's little doubt that most of the parents who approach independent counselors think they will improve their children's chances of getting into a good school. Look at consultants' Web sites and promotional materials, and the message is hard to miss. Some not only list the schools to which their

clients have been admitted but also say how *many* of their clients have been admitted there. If asked, some counselors will even tell you which admissions offices they find are friendliest to independent counselors. (Georgetown never seems to be on the list.) When pressed, though, most reputable independent counselors say they never try to help kids get into schools they're unsuited for. "Our goal is what's in the best interest and future planning for the child," Howard Greene says. "It's not taking the fee from parents by claiming you can shoehorn a kid into an elite college." Counselors are not hired guns, they argue, but matchmakers, sounding boards, knowledge banks. Or, as Cohen puts it, "We don't get kids into college. Students get themselves into college."

In truth, it's hard to evaluate how useful or effective private counseling is in any given case—and impossible to say whether a kid could have gotten into a particular college without outside help. Experienced college admissions officers have usually read tens of thousands of essays,

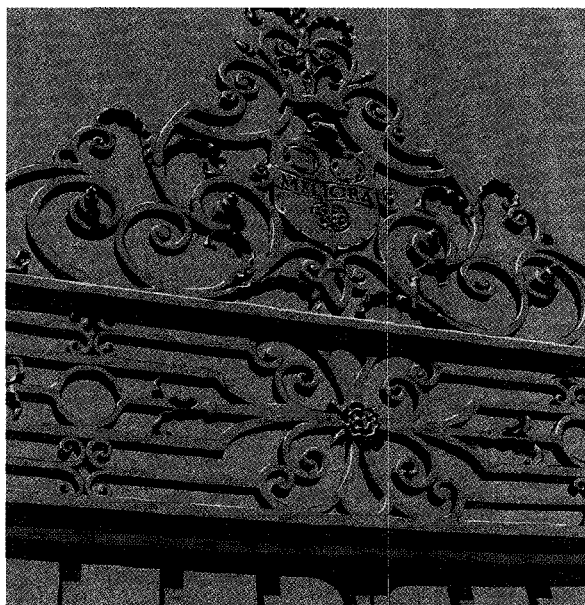
recommendations, and brag sheets during their careers; they're good at ferreting out the signs of overaggressive coaching. If you don't already have what it takes to get into a selective college, they argue, you probably can't get it from an independent counselor. "I am still pretty darn good at reading an essay and telling you what the verbal SAT is," Tom Parker says. "I'll read an essay and say, 'Yeah, somewhere in the seven hundreds, or somewhere in the six hundreds,' and I'm usually right. For a place like [Amherst], ninety percent of applicants have extraordinary consistency in their application file, from beginning to end. You look at the scores, at what the teachers say about them, and you say, 'This all hangs together, this makes sense to me.'" Most of the admissions officers I spoke with said that extra college counseling, when undertaken by talented kids, is usually superfluous—and in some cases can actually hurt

their chances. "Many families now feel they are disadvantaging their kids if they don't sign them up for all this stuff," says Robin Mamlet, the dean of admission and financial aid at Stanford. "The irony is that sometimes it really does obscure the real individual underneath and make it harder for us to see who they are—and harder for them to get in."

Over time that, too, may prompt a reaction from the world of elite higher education. If colleges begin to lose faith that the soft parts of an application truly reflect the

kid whose name is on it, the pendulum will begin swinging back in the direction of the hard measures—toward an admissions culture that depends largely or even entirely on standardized-test scores. For now, admissions officers at selective schools "do have the opportunity to do full-file review," Parker says. "We come somewhere close to making some judgments on soft data that I think make our admissions process superior to an exam-driven process. But I see all of the forces that are trying to control all the soft data, where we make our interpretation, and driving us toward an exam-driven culture." That would do more than solidify the advantages of high-scoring affluent kids—it might, perversely, put most educational consultants out of business. Until then, however, it's tempting to view independent counseling as, in Poch's words, "the 2004 version of unnecessary orthodontia." ■

Nicholas Confessore is an editor at Washington Monthly and a senior correspondent for The American Prospect. He is a 2003 winner of the Livingston Award for national reporting.



The Third Way

Liberal arts or a professional education? More and more students are choosing to combine elements of both. A leading proponent describes the emerging trend he calls "practice-oriented education"

BY RICHARD M. FREELAND

Liberal education and professional education have traditionally been considered opposites. According to received academic wisdom, students seeking broad exposure to the arts and sciences should not be burdened with acquiring workplace skills, and students preparing for careers in fields such as business and engineering should not be diverted by more than a token engagement with "irrelevant" liberal arts content.

But this view is changing—which is a good thing. Slowly but surely, higher education is evolving a new paradigm for undergraduate study that erodes the long-standing divide between liberal and professional education. Many liberal arts colleges now offer courses and majors in professional fields; professional disciplines, meanwhile, have become more serious about the arts and sciences. Moreover, universities are encouraging students to include both liberal arts and professional coursework in their programs of study, while internships and other kinds of off-campus experience have gained widespread acceptance in both liberal and professional disciplines. Gradually taking shape is a curricular "third way" that systematically integrates liberal education, professional education, and off-campus experience to produce college graduates who are both well educated and well prepared for the workplace.

Though this trend has not yet coalesced into a movement with a clear identity, evidence of it can be found in the statements of educational leaders and in the offerings of many colleges and universities. It is time to recognize this pattern, to urge its codification as a powerful alternative to traditional practices, and to give it a name. Because this new approach builds bridges between the realm of the intellect and the arenas of action and practice, let us call it "practice-oriented education."

Practice-oriented education began taking shape amid the turbulence of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the twenty years following World War II, academia had enjoyed a golden age of expansion, prosperity, and support. But a combination of student protests, unforeseen financial problems, and the beginnings of the "baby bust" brought that era to an end. Government leaders as well as prospective students and their parents began asking hard questions about higher education's return on investment. The percentage of young people seeking college admission,

which had risen steadily since 1945, began to level off, and some feared it might actually decline.

This "time of troubles," as it became known, prompted extensive self-examination within academia and critical commentary by outsiders. Official commissions, campus-based committees, and individual observers offered varying analyses of what had gone wrong and how it could be fixed. The most remarkable example was the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, which from 1968 to 1975 produced ninety reports touching on virtually every aspect of academia.

The most fundamental result of this soul-searching was a greater thoughtfulness about the democratization of higher education. Before World War II the academy had been largely the preserve of elites. After 1945 it became steadily more open—first to veterans, then to the broad middle class, and finally to the truly disadvantaged. The institutional response to this dramatic change in student demographics was not what one might have expected. As its clientele became more "modern," higher education became more traditional. In the prosperity of the postwar years

After 1945 the academy became steadily more open. But as its clientele became more "modern," higher education became more traditional.

many campuses tried to recast themselves in the image of the Ivy League. New and expanding public universities modeled themselves on top-tier research institutions. Before the war, and during the veterans' era of the late 1940s, professional disciplines had been the fastest-growing ones at four-year institutions. From the mid-1950s through the 1960s, in contrast, the liberal arts boomed.

Study groups of the late 1960s and early 1970s recognized the irony: the expanding college-bound population represented a progressively wider range of backgrounds, needs, and interests, yet higher education was moving toward a single model based on top-ranked campuses. Many concluded that academia simply had to offer more choices. As the Carnegie Commission put it, "A main theme [of our work] is the desirability of a greater diversity of programs to match the greater diversity of students."

Colleges and universities responded in the 1970s with an era of experimentation. Course requirements were loosened. Interdisciplinary programs flourished. Multiculturalism took root, and the "canon" was expanded. Simultaneously, enrollments shifted away from the liberal arts and

back toward professional majors, while institutions began to focus on strengthening their distinctive qualities rather than on becoming mini-Harvards.

One reaction to these developments was widespread complaint about an "erosion of standards" taking place. In its 1985 report "Integrity in the College Curriculum," the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the nation's most prominent association of liberal arts colleges, complained, "As for what [now] passes as a college curriculum, almost anything goes." Describing the experimentation as a sign of "confusion as to the mission of the American college and university," the AAC&U expressed particular alarm that "the very distinction between the 'liberal' and the 'vocational' that runs through two millennia of educational theory is no longer universal."

But another response to the trends of the 1970s and 1980s, which received much less attention, may be of greater long-term importance. Some educators recognized that higher education had been permanently democratized, and that many students—including some of the most talented—had a legitimate interest in preparing themselves

attention to combining liberal and professional studies could also be found at leading research universities such as Penn, Tulane, and Johns Hopkins.

This hybridization did not occur without friction. Some liberal arts faculty members resented teaching students whose central interests were professional. But others recognized that contemporary students were simply trying to arm themselves for a highly uncertain and competitive job market. These professors began to explore ways in which professionally oriented studies could be better linked with liberal arts learning. James Appleton, the president of the University of Redlands, expressed the new way of thinking in a letter to *The College Board Review* in 1990: "While it is important to be concerned about whether the 'pure' liberal arts college represents a disappearing segment of the educational market, a more important question may be this: How do we best organize and articulate the relationship between liberal education and professional education?" Appleton's views were reflected in the formation of an association of institutions committed to integrating professional and liberal studies. By 2004 the Associated New American Colleges claimed twenty-one members, including Redlands, Drake, Ithaca, Rollins, Simmons, and Susquehanna.

Still more striking was a recent report of the Greater Expectations National Panel of the AAC&U, which proposed to "erase the artificial distinctions between studies deemed liberal ... and those called practical" and suggested that professional studies—such as business, education, health sciences, and engineering—should be approached as liberal education. It's hard to imagine a more dramatic change from the association's 1985 report lamenting the blurring of "liberal" and "vocational" studies.

Just as thoughtful champions of the liberal arts have called for greater integration of liberal and professional studies, reform-minded academics on the professional side have moved toward a greater appreciation of the liberal arts. In the mid-1980s a group based at the University of Michigan formed the Professional Preparation Network to pursue a more interconnected curriculum, an effort described in its 1988 report, "Strengthening the Ties That Bind: Integrating Undergraduate Liberal and Professional Study." Meanwhile, professional accrediting associations in engineering, business, education, and nursing have increasingly insisted that majors in those fields take a certain number of liberal arts courses, and sometimes even specific subjects.

Aiding these bridge-building efforts has been academics' heightened appreciation for interdisciplinary work—a trend that began right after World War II and accelerated during the experimentalism of the 1970s. Students have been very responsive to this trend. Enrollment patterns reveal a high level of interest in interdisciplinary programs and in double majors that for some can provide a way to combine traditional academic studies with work in a professional subject. The dean of the College of Letters, Arts

Through the 1970s and 1980s struggling liberal arts colleges found they could maintain enrollments by offering career-related subjects.

for the workplace. The most constructive response to these realities, they concluded, was neither to abandon the liberal arts nor to defend them tooth-and-nail against any change but, rather, to build bridges between liberal and professional education, and to bring college closer to adult life by incorporating nonacademic experiences into undergraduate programs.

The initial impetus for bridging the liberal-professional divide was practical. Through the 1970s and 1980s struggling liberal arts colleges found they could maintain enrollments by offering career-related subjects. Some added professional courses to their curricula, and some partnered with other campuses to create "3/2" programs: three years of liberal arts and two years of professional study, leading to two degrees. Such offerings could be found not only in the middle of the academic pecking order, at places such as Eckerd, Hendrix, and Alverno, but also at elite institutions such as Smith, Wellesley, and Claremont McKenna. By the 1990s most liberal arts colleges had some students studying professional subjects, and many had a majority doing so. Heightened



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and Sciences at the University of Southern California recently told *The New York Times* that after the curriculum was restructured to emphasize double majors and minors, the number of liberal arts students earning professional minors "increased phenomenally."

Off-campus learning, which constitutes the second pillar of practice-oriented education, has evolved in parallel with the liberal-professional rapprochement. Before the 1960s only a few experimental institutions, including Antioch and Bennington, embraced the idea that a liberal education could include practical experience. Among professional disciplines, only health-care and teacher education stressed the importance of workplace learning. The most radical early attempt to integrate practical experience with undergraduate professional study was the cooperative-education movement in engineering, in which students alternated periods of full-time study and full-time paid employment. But prior to 1970 "co-op" was emphasized at a relatively small number of universities, including Cincinnati and my own school, Northeastern.

After the time of troubles illuminated students' restless-

as many as three fourths of all students have at least one internship or similar off-campus experience during their college years.

Much of the thinking behind off-campus programs harks back to John Dewey, who argued nearly a century ago that all learning is deepened through experience. Wellesley, for example, explains its program—which offers internships, study abroad, and voluntary community service—as an opportunity for students to "explore the relationship between learning that occurs away from campus and their liberal arts education." In fact off-campus programs serve many purposes. Internships give liberal arts majors a taste of workplace experience and allow students in professional fields to test their skills and interests. "Service learning" programs develop habits of civic engagement by linking college courses to actual work in community service.

Practice-oriented education has yet to produce a standard curricular model, but its essential principles are clear: All undergraduates should have access to coursework that bridges the divide between liberal and professional education or even systematically integrates the two. Similarly, all students should have opportunities to deepen their understanding of classroom subjects through off-campus experience. Campus policies and culture should actively encourage both aims, through formal requirements or electives and through faculty advising and attitudes.

Patterns of study within a practice-oriented curriculum will vary depending on a student's interests. Liberal arts majors should have the option of taking courses, minors, and double majors in the professional disciplines, as appropriate to their plans. At Lehigh, for example, students in the College of Arts and Sciences are urged to take advantage of the College of Business and Economics and the College of Engineering and Applied Science.

Students in professional majors, meanwhile, should take liberal arts courses taught by regular faculty members and designed cooperatively by the professional and liberal arts departments. These students should also have access to a rich array of minors and double majors that allow them either to explore their professional interests more deeply—as when a student of business takes a minor in economics—or to pursue an avocational interest, as when a nursing student studies music or art. Caltech exemplifies this approach, stressing that students in professional majors should be provided with "well rounded, integrated programs that will not only give them sound training in their professional fields [but] also develop character, intellectual breadth, and physical well-being." To make room for this kind of program, professional faculties should rid their curricula of excessive technical content that can be learned on the job by well-educated graduates.

Such combinations of liberal and professional coursework represent the simplest approach to practice-oriented

At Lehigh, for example, students in the College of Arts and Sciences are encouraged to take advantage of the business and engineering schools.

ness with traditional curricular forms, academics began giving more attention to off-campus experience. In 1971 the Carnegie Commission recommended that all colleges "encourage prospective and continuing students to obtain service and work experience" as part of their undergraduate programs. Even the American Academy of Arts and Sciences jumped on the bandwagon in a 1971 report recommending that students "be permitted to intermingle study and work in ways that are now uncommon."

In this context off-campus study grew exponentially. From 1970 to 1986, with support from federal funding, the number of schools offering cooperative education grew from about two hundred to more than a thousand. Other approaches, most notably internships, grew even more rapidly. Several traditional New England colleges—including Colby, Tufts, Mount Holyoke, Wheaton, and Trinity—moved in this direction in the 1970s. By century's end, according to the American Council on Education, virtually every college and university in the country offered some type of off-campus program. Some recent surveys report that

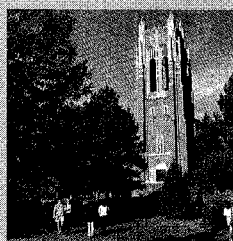
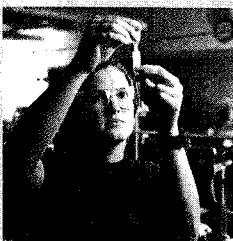
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education. A step beyond are approaches in which the boundary between liberal arts and professional programs is dissolved altogether, and educators from both sides collaborate on interdisciplinary curricula. Babson College, for instance, has developed an integrated curriculum for business majors in which the skills and abilities needed by practitioners are developed by a combination of liberal arts and professional courses. Such collaboration can also result in exciting general-education courses taught by teams of liberal arts and professional faculty members. The "World Courses" at the University of Maryland are illustrative: for example, a course focused on the damming of the Nile River has been taught by members of the departments of civil engineering, microbiology, and government and politics.

Off-campus experience and classroom work can also be integrated in various ways. Students should have not only access to internships, co-ops, or other off-campus experiences but also opportunities to reflect systematically on these experiences in relation to their classroom studies. At Northeastern, faculty members in each department have designed an "integrated learning model" that carefully links students' coursework to a succession of workplace assignments, and provides "reflection seminars" to help students returning from off-campus placements clarify what they have learned.

The ultimate goal of off-campus work is to help students learn how to learn from experience. This sounds easier than it is. For most well-educated adults the worlds of intellectual learning and practical experience remain locked in separate mental chambers—one associated with school, the other with work. Practice-oriented education aims to connect the two in a way that gives new meaning to the idea of lifelong learning.

Though the building blocks for a practice-oriented curriculum are readily available on many campuses, much work remains to be done before the fragmented efforts described in this essay come together as an accepted "third way" of educating undergraduates. That will not happen until both academic skeptics and thoughtful education consumers become believers. To that end let us see how practice-oriented programs compare with traditional curricular models in meeting the most enduring goals of undergraduate education.



Historically, undergraduate study has served four broad purposes: promoting intellectual capacity; developing professional competencies; fostering breadth of understanding, traditionally of cultural history but more recently of the academic disciplines; and nurturing values to guide adult behavior.

These goals are conceptually distinct but hard to separate in practice. For example, champions of the liberal arts argue that their disciplines not only promote intellectual development but, precisely by doing so, offer a sounder preparation for work than applied subjects. This claim, though consistently advanced, rests on stereotypes: a flattering one of the liberal arts as a font of fundamental knowledge, and a demeaning one of professional study as purely practical instruction. The truth is that both liberal arts and professional subjects can be presented either

superficially or with conceptual depth and rigor. Anyone who thinks the typical liberal arts curriculum consists entirely of thoughtful, challenging courses hasn't looked at a college catalogue recently. And anyone who believes that all professional curricula lack demanding conceptual material is way behind the times. In truth, neither liberal nor professional education alone is the best way to sharpen undergraduates' intellectual powers.

Professional educators, meanwhile, often argue that applied studies offer students

the best career preparation because a mastery of specific skills helps them gain traction in the workplace. There is an undeniable basis for this claim. In a field involving formal licensure—engineering, say, or pharmacy—such knowledge is indispensable; in a field such as business, it helps graduates get a foot in the door. Most students plan to go straight from college into the workplace, and for them at least some explicitly professional coursework is valuable. But professional educators do their students a great disservice when they fail to take liberal learning seriously. Most professional knowledge rests on theoretical and empirical work in the basic disciplines, and grasping the link between theory and practice is indispensable. In any case, undergraduates preparing for the workplace deserve to know more about the world than the skill set associated with their craft.

But what of students headed for graduate school in fields like law and medicine? As many famous cases attest, a traditional liberal arts curriculum can serve such students well. Nonetheless, their understanding of their undergradu-

ate majors would most likely be enriched by seeing how theories and concepts play out in the real world. Moreover, there is something deeply irrational about expecting a student to choose a career without having any actual experience of his or her anticipated professional environment. It is hard to see why prospective graduate students—even those headed for scholarly careers—would not benefit from some professional coursework or off-campus experience.

For two of our historical purposes, then—developing intellectual capacities and preparing for careers—the advantages of integrating liberal education, professional studies, and off-campus experience are clear. To consider the third purpose—fostering breadth of understanding—we need to recognize that contemporary approaches to general education bear little resemblance to classic liberal education. Today, “general education” often means little more than loosely structured distribution requirements intended to expose students to different “ways of knowing,” as represented by the various academic disciplines. Often these requirements are also supposed to enable students to grasp in some practical way the impact of technology, or the significance of the environment, or the pervasiveness of ethnic diversity. Since all these goals involve helping students understand the physical and social world they will experience as adults, they are more likely to be advanced by a practice-oriented combination of academic and applied coursework than by a completely theoretical approach.

The fourth historical goal of undergraduate education is to develop students’ character—in particular, their moral and social values. Champions of the liberal arts have long asserted the superiority of the traditional disciplines in this realm. But moral and ethical constructs deserve serious attention primarily to the extent that they affect behavior. It is only when we consider such ideas in the context of actual choices and decisions—the standard fare of applied subjects—or, better, try to enact them outside the classroom that we begin to truly understand how to apply moral knowledge to our lives. This is the essential insight of contemporary service-learning programs, in which students who want to serve society develop their capacities by actually doing so.

In the end, claims for the moral superiority of liberal education reflect a bias against—even a disdain for—the workaday earning experiences of most adults, as if academic learning had a monopoly on value and meaning and other forms of work were solely about material gain. This perspective is an unfortunate relic from the tradition of classical—and class-based—education in Britain, from which the contemporary liberal arts are descended. For most of us, however, the workplace is more than a place to make a living. Often work is what gives our lives value beyond our families and ourselves, and enables us to make a broader contribution to society.

Instead of deriding students’ interest in their careers, we should help them see how the work they do can promote personal growth, intellectual adventure, social purpose, and moral development. We should show them how the values of intellectual honesty, personal integrity, and tolerance can strengthen the institutions in which they will work. And we should help them build bridges between the intellectual concerns they encounter in philosophy, literature, and history courses and the decisions they will have to make as business leaders, lawyers, and government officials. Properly conceived, practice-oriented education can provide at least as powerful a moral education as any purely academic study of ethics.

Practice-oriented education is no panacea. In advocating a course of study that systematically integrates liberal education, professional education, and off-campus experience, I do not mean to diminish traditional approaches to either liberal or professional studies. Many students have flourished within such curricula, and many will do so in the future. Some undergraduates will have no

Instead of deriding students’ interest in their careers, we should help them see how the work they do can promote personal growth and moral development.

interest in building off-campus experience into their college years. Moreover, implementing a practice-oriented curriculum is not easy. It requires faculties to collaborate across lines of professional separation that have been in place for generations. It requires colleges and universities to provide more than token support for off-campus programs. And it requires a level of attention to undergraduate learning that many university professors will find difficult to muster.

Nonetheless, many faculty members, students, and campuses have found their way toward some preliminary version of practice-oriented education over the past thirty years. These efforts deserve the serious consideration of educators, parents, and students alike. For many undergraduates, practice-oriented education will enhance learning and produce significant developmental gains. It is time for the nation’s educators to embrace this latent movement and to recognize an important educational idea that can transform and enrich the college experience. ▀

*Richard M. Freeland is the president of Northeastern University and the author of *Academia’s Golden Age* (1992). Research assistance for this article was provided by Dan Adams and George Dehner.*

FLORENCE OF ARABIA

(PART II)

One woman's crusade to bring female emancipation to the Middle East. A short story

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Illustration by Paul Cox

.....

Florence Farfaletti, a longtime Foreign Service officer, has gone to the Middle Eastern country of Matar with a mission: to liberate the women of the region, especially of the ultra-repressive neighboring country of Wasabia. Her team consists of Bobby Thibodeaux, a disgraced Green Beret; Rick Renard, a "strategic planner"; and George Phish, a State Department friend. They are funded by a mysterious figure, "Uncle Sam." Their weapon of choice: TV programs.

The Emirate of Matar (pronounced, for reasons unclear, *Mutter*) consists of a ten-mile-wide, 350-mile-long strip of sand that runs down the western side of the Gulf of Darius. Its northern boundary begins in the mosquito marshes of the Um-Katush. From there it takes a generally southeastern course to the Straits of Xerxes, where it curves gently westward until it terminates at Alfatoosh, on the sparkling shore of the Arabian Sea.

This bizarre physical configuration—the direct result of “Winnie’s” vengeful cartological pen (for a full account of Matar’s creation, see David Vremkin’s magisterial history, *Let’s Put Iraq Here, and Lebanon Over Here: The Making of the Modern Middle East*)—left King Tallulah, of the neighboring, landlocked country Wasabia, with no choice but to make a deal with the emir of Matar. Wasabia built its first pipeline through Matar to the Gulf shortly after the signing of the treaty resulting from Churchill’s machinations. Over the years a dozen more followed.

The Emirate of Matar prospered magnificently from this steady black income stream through its territory. The emirs never released official figures, but it was estimated that by the end of the century the “courtesy fees” paid by Wasabia into the royal Matar exchequer ran annually to the tens of billions of dollars. Matar’s bin Haz dynasty continued to maintain the face-saving fiction that the country’s extraordinary wealth derived from fig oil, dates, fishing, and tourism.

This last assertion was in some ways the boldest, given Matar’s fierce sandstorms and average (winter) temperature of 105°. Matar

could, however, legitimately boast that part of its abundant gross domestic product came from gambling. The present emir developed “Infidel-Land,” a complex of hotels, casinos, and theme parks on an archipelago accessible by a ten-mile-long causeway. Officially Matari residents were not allowed across the causeway to take part in the gaming and collateral activities, but this law was rarely observed and never enforced. The emir had decreed it as a bit of window-dressing for the local mullahs.

His handling of Matar’s religious authorities had, by unanimous consent, been masterly. Matari mullahs were the best fed in the Muslim world. Indeed, they were so prosperous that they had acquired the local nickname “moolahs.” Each received a generous salary from the state, a luxury apartment, a new Mercedes-Benz every three years, and an annual six-week paid “sabbatical,” which most of them chose to take in the south of France, one of Islam’s holiest sites.

As a result of the emir’s attentions in this area, Matar was a veritable oasis of tolerance. Its mullahs were among the most contented and laissez-faire of their faith. As one scholar put it, “Here, truly, is Islam with a happy face.” Clerical careers were avidly sought in Matar, and strictly regulated.

This approach to matters religious stood in starkest contrast with that across the border in Wasabia. After Sheikh Abdulabdullah “The Wise” fended off a challenge to his rule in 1740 (or 1742), he struck a deal with the Imam of the Nejaz in order to consolidate his power throughout the territory. The Imam preached an extremely austere version of Islam called Mukfella. Abdulabdullah agreed to make Mukfella the official religion of Wasabia if the Imam would pledge his allegiance to the Hamooj dynasty. Thus Wasabia united under one rule.

Alas, this doomed Wasabia to becoming, as one historian put it, the Middle East’s pre-eminent “no fun zone”—unless, as he dryly noted, “one’s idea of fun includes beheading, amputation, flogging, blinding, and having your tongue cut out for offenses that in other religions would earn you a lecture from the rabbi, five Hail Marys from

Christopher Buckley is the author of ten previous books. This story is the second of two drawn from his novel Florence of Arabia, published this month by Random House.



a priest, or, for Episcopalians, a plastic pink flamingo on your front lawn." A Google search using the key phrases "Wasabia" and "La Dolce Vita" results in "No matches."

This disparity in religious temperament, added to the matter of the national border, made relations between the two countries predictably strained. King Tallulah's successors chafed at having to pay Matar emirs the "Churchill tax."

The United States maintained good relations with Wasabia (the unthinkable alternative being to use less oil), but it had always supported Matar's sovereignty, as a means of containing Wasabi power. That old lion Churchill may have been drunk, but he was shrewd. The U.S. "tilt" toward Matar also had the advantage—as Henry Kissinger noted in *Years of Genius*, Volume XXI of his memoirs—of "driving the Wasabis nuts."

Wasabia periodically rattled its scimitar at Matar and threatened to push through to the sea, but these episodes were not taken seriously. Protected by America, its economy guaranteed by Wasabi oil, its religious authorities fat, happy, and uncensorious, Matar was the Switzerland of the Gulf. All it lacked was a Matterhorn and a chocolate-bar industry.

All in all, it was the perfect platform for Florence and her team. And there was another advantage: you could order a drink at the bar.

The Emirate of Matar was liberal in the matter of women's dress; nonetheless, Florence took care to observe the formalities for her introduction to the emir. She wore a pantsuit of turquoise and purple shantung silk and an Hermès scarf over her hair.

She was ushered into the audience room. The door was flanked by two bodyguards in ceremonial dress and swords.

"*As-salaam alaikum*," Florence said, without an accent. "*Sherefnā, sumuukum*."

The emir's eyes brightened, and not just at his guest's flawless Arabic. He took her hand and bent and chastely kissed it. Florence blushed. She continued in Arabic, remembering that in Matar the protocol in conversation with the emir was to use the third-person address—not altogether easy for Americans, who want to call everyone "pal" or "bub" or "honey" after five minutes.

They sat. Florence noted that her Louis XVI chair was a few inches lower than the emir's Louis XIV chair. At not quite five-foot-six—exactly the height, it occurred to Florence, of T. E. Lawrence—Emir Gazzir bin Haz ("Gazzy" to his family and intimates) was not a tall man. What large things small men have accomplished.

He was impeccably accoutered in an immaculate white *thobe*, his head covered with a *ghutra*, a triangular folded cloth tied with gold braid. Four of his plump fingers were adorned with rings. His goatee was perfectly trimmed, his lips oyster-moist from a lifetime's contact with the great-

est delicacies the world had to offer, from caviar to Dom Perignon to foie gras. His face radiated contentment; and indeed, why not? The emir just might be the happiest camper on earth.

"His Majesty is most welcoming," Florence said with a slight bow.

"It is a trait with us," he said, switching to English. He was, like most high-born Mataris, an Anglophile (they sent their future emirs to Sandhurst), and liked to display his excellent command of the language. "Even the humblest Matar will open his door to a stranger and share what he has." He smiled. "Not that you will find many humble Mataris, mind you. This, too, is a trait with us, I fear."

"Your country is truly blessed to have such abundance."

"Our fig oil is second to none."

"Justly famous, throughout the world."

"It has many, many applications. Perfume, industrial—do you know that it is used as a lubricant on Chinese rockets?"

"I was not aware of this fact. But how marvelous."

The emir leaned forward intently. "It lowers cholesterol. Rather, it increases the good cholesterol. In time medical studies will establish this beyond question, God be praised."

"Matar is a river to the world."

They looked at each other.

"Shall we cease with the bullshitting, Ms. Farfal—Madame?"

"His Majesty is too gracious. I was about to run out of conversation about fig oil."

"I've never used it myself," the emir said, taking a cigarette from a gold box in front of him. A servant dressed to match the drapery appeared like a swift ghost. He lit the emir's cigarette and disappeared back into the folds with a rustle of silk. "Ghastly stuff. I prefer walnut oil, pressed by four-hundred-year-old millstones in the Dordogne. I have it flown in. Anyway, who cares about cholesterol? I have my blood changed every month by Swiss doctors. I donate the old blood to the hospital. It is quite sought after, apparently. Now, Florence (and why don't I just call you that, since I am unable to wrap my tongue around all those pretty Tuscan vowels?), your Arabic is excellent. You are, I take it, with the government? Surely in some capacity. CIA? It would be audacious of them to send a woman. Would they have such imagination? I think not. So"—his eyes narrowed a bit, showing Florence a glimpse of the hard-eyed coastal trader of yore—"who are you, lovely lady? And without seeming rude, what do you want?"

This bluntness was utterly un-Arabic. Had she put a foot wrong? It took Florence a moment to compose herself.

"His Majesty favors me with his directness. I have come to ask your permission to approach Sheikha Laila with a business proposal."

The emir's features screwed up into a grimace. His face, a caramel pudding in repose, suddenly looked quite fierce.

"Business proposal? The sheikha? You've not come to ask her to endorse some product?"

"No, *sumuu al-amir*."

"A cause? A children's disease? No—land mines. All the beautiful women, they are against land mines. We don't have any here, I am happy to say. Though there have been times when, I freely confess, I would happily plant them like flowers along my borders."

"I do not seek the sheikha's endorsement of any skin cream or disease or against land mines. We would like to start a satellite-television station here in Matar, and have her be in charge of it."

The emir stared. "Television, you say. The sheikha. I hardly think ..."

Wasabia was the Middle East's pre-eminent "no fun zone"—unless fun includes "having your tongue cut out for offenses that in other religions would earn a lecture from the rabbi or five Hail Marys."

"With His Majesty's permission, I would show him some numbers."

"The emir must not deal with numbers. There are ministers for that, for every kind of number."

"These are unusually interesting numbers. They suggest that there are vast sums to be made. But I will take them to the ministers, as His Majesty commands."

"How do you mean, 'vast'? The desert is vast. The ocean is vast."

"In the neighborhood of two billion dollars a year, my lord."

"That's not half vast."

Florence handed the emir the single sheet of paper she had prepared.

"What sort of programming?" he asked.

"These figures are based on targeting a female audience, my lord."

The emir again screwed up his face. "Female?"

"They are the ones who do the shopping. Who make the purchases."

"I suppose. Who has the time but the women? But there is already an Arabic satellite-television station. Al-Jazeera. I will say, in case you are with the CIA, that I am not in sympathy with its political point of view. Every time I turn it on, there is Osama bin Laden, sitting in front of his cave, looking in urgent need of a new kidney. But then one can always"—he pressed a button on an imaginary remote control—"see what is on the History Channel. There is always another documentary on Hitler. They ought really to call it 'The Hitler Channel.' But why the sheikha?"

"Many reasons. First, she is the sheikha, the first lady

of Matar, a personage of reputation and authority. Second, she has experience in television."

"Yes," the emir said, as if warming to the concept, "she was very successful in London. Until she gave it up to marry a ... towelhead."

Florence wasn't quite sure how to field that one. She smiled in a noncommittal sort of way.

"But a very nice towel," he continued. "Go on. You have our attention."

"Third, we of course need a Matari partner in this enterprise, since by law Mataris must own at least half of any business operating here. These three factors make the sheikha, as they say, a natural."

"Who is 'we'? For starters, who are you?"

"I am merely a producer. This project is my concept. Of course, with an enterprise of this size one has backers, investors. We're prepared to give the people of Matar fifty-one-percent ownership."

"Um."

"Shall we say fifty-five percent?"

"I apologize, my hearing is not what it used to be."

"Sixty percent?"

"And the sheikha's role, she would be ... ornamental?"

"On the contrary. It is our hope that she would become very much involved. It was this part that worried me in presenting this to His Majesty."

"How so?"

"I fear that we might be, well, taking her away from you. Starting a television station can be a very consuming enterprise. But very fulfilling."

"Ah. Well, that is for her to decide, of course."

"His Majesty's reputation as an enlightened man and husband does not do him justice."

"We are not a backward people. Unlike some in the region. I shall present your proposal to the sheikha. I must say I have mixed feelings, for is it not written that a man who makes his wife queen ends up washing the dishes?"

"But is it not also written, sire, that a man who gives his wife an occupation creates for himself an oasis?"

"I'm not sure what part of scripture either of us is quoting, but you may have something there, Ms. Farfa—Florence. Now, if you will excuse me, my next audience is upon me. You see that an emir's life is not all fig oil."

"I hardly see how His Majesty manages at all."

A large complex outside Amo-Amas, the capital of Matar, was made available to Florence and her team. The work proceeded at fever pace, twenty hours a day. What sleep was to be had was had on cots in the office. But no one complained. Excitement and purpose coursed through their shop. Bobby and George were sniping less at each other. Uncle Sam, in the guise of a Las Vegas-based

gaming consultant, flew in for a brief visit and pronounced himself delighted with their progress. He reported that he had arranged for the necessary satellites. "Got a great deal from the NSA on some used birds," he said with a grin. Uncle Sam seemed to have an all-access backstage pass to the U.S. government. Florence no longer sought to pinpoint his precise role within it. She assumed that he was with the CIA. Perhaps he belonged to some directorate within a directorate, one of those star chambers set up for a specific mission years ago and never shut down, still operating, like a probe launched at a distant planet that keeps on going, deeper and deeper into the frosty night of space, autonomous, serene, oblivious.

Rick Renard, TVMatar's chief of programming, was in a private Eden. What PR man hasn't dreamed of having his own TV station with no client breathing over his shoulder?

This morning Rick was doubly excited, because he was previewing for Florence and Sheikha Laila the show that would be the centerpiece of TVM's morning schedule.

"You're going to love this," he said. "This is our flagship. The tone-setter. The anchor, if you will."

"Weigh anchor, Rick. I have to meet with the fragrance people in half an hour." Florence felt more like an advertis-

ing director these days than the godmother of Arab feminism. She was furiously pitching advertisers. The more ads the enterprise had, the more legitimate it would look—and the more money would flow into Gazzy's coffers, keeping him happy.

"Her real name's Fatima Sham," Rick said, as the video clip started to roll. A veiled figure—the program's chief hostess—came onto the set, which was arranged in a manner typical of morning talk shows. She walked into the coffee table and pitched forward head over heels, in the process revealing beautiful calves sheerly stockinged and, above those, a generous glimpse of lovely thigh and a garter belt. There was an explosion of female laughter on the soundtrack.

"We had to add that," Rick said. "The actual audience didn't know what to make of it. But once they got it, oh, man, did they get it. It was like this release of a thousand years of repression and—"

"Shall we just watch, Rick?"

The name of the show came up in letters: *Cher Azade*.

"We tested," Rick said. "They all got it right away that it's French. 'Dear Azade,' a play on Scheherazade."

A line came up below the title, in Arabic: "A Thousand and One Mornings."

The hostess, Azade, picked herself up off the floor and bumped into one of the chairs. The audience roared. She felt her way to her seat and sat down.

"This new veil," she said. "I can't see a thing ..."

Rick said, "*I Love Lucy* meets *The Arabian Nights*. Listen."

"Don't tell the religious police," Azade said, "or it will be forty lashes. And that's just for showing an inch of ankle!"

The audience laughed.

"Well," Florence said, "that'll get their attention. Laila?"

"Oh, yes."

Rick said, "Now, here's the beautiful part. They can't touch her, technically. George found a loophole in the Book of Hamooj, where they get all these bullshit rules from."

"Rick, please don't use that language in front of the sheikha."

"I can handle it, Florence," Laila said.

"Right. The *mukfelleen*, the Wasabi religious police, the ones who go around with whips, beating women if so much as an inch of flesh is exposed—theoretically they can't complain, because it was *technically* an accident that she tripped. Never mind that we rehearsed her tripping so many times that she's got bruises up and down her shins. George—he knows all this shit—found this clause in that book where if you reveal your flesh accidentally, you get a free pass. It goes way, way back. Some Hamooji princess fell off her camel and went ass over teakettle. Everyone saw her legs. It was this *huge* scandal. The whole caravan had to stop while they debated whether to stone her or cut off her head. Someone finally said, 'Wait a minute, this is the caliph's favorite squeeze we're talking about here. He's waiting for her in

PRAISE

I heard the dogs before
I opened the door late, after work—
first Maude who was dancing
in praise of my arrival for all she knew
it was: presence without end,
the end of waiting, the end
of boredom—
and then Li Po,
who, in the middle of his life,
learning to make his feelings known
as one who has carried breath
and heart close to the earth seven
times seven years, in praise
of silence and loneliness, climbed
howling, howling from his bed.

—LAURIE LAMON

Laurie Lamon's forthcoming collection of poems is *The Fork Without Hunger*. She teaches English at Whitworth College, in Spokane, Washington.

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Kaffa, and we're going to bring him her *head* in a basket? Fuck that.' But the religious cops had to save face. So they wrote it into the religious law that you can't be punished if the flesh was revealed accidentally. So from a religious point of view, they can't lay a hand on us."

"They're going to go ballistic," Florence said.

Rick shrugged. "Isn't that the whole point?"

TVMatar went on the air at sunrise on the day of the new spring moon. Advertisements had been taken out in newspapers and magazines in both Matar and Wasabia, alerting women to a new station "just for you!" and full of "delicious recipes" and "advice on everything from raising a family to being a good wife in today's society." The ads flew under the radar of the Wasabi censors, who assumed this was just another of those shows where you learn how to make zesty hummus and properly starch your husband's *thobe*. How surprised, then, were all the males of Wasabia to hear the peals of female laughter as *Cher Azade* beamed into homes from Wanbo to Kaffa to Akbukir.

"My next guest—not that I can see her—are you there, Farah?"

"Over here, Azade."

"God be praised. Now, Farah, I understand you have actually driven a car?"

"Yes! A Mercedes."

"It's too exciting. What's it like, driving an automobile?"

"Florence, your Arabic is excellent," the emir said. "You are, I take it, with the government? CIA? Who are you, lovely lady? And without seeming rude, what do you want?"

"Thrilling—thrilling beyond words."

"Did you hit anything?"

"Just some *mukfelleen* who were chasing me. So I backed up and ran them over again."

"Oh, dear," Azade scolded. "That will earn you a good beating. What did you do then?"

"I kept on going till I got to the border. The car is outside. I left the motor running. Would you like to go for a drive?"

"Only if we can run over religious police. Now, don't go away, even if you do have a car, because we have a wonderful program for you, including a self-defense instructor who's going to give us tips on how to cope with cranky, violent husbands and boyfriends during Ramadan."

The phones soon began to ring at the Ministry of the Enforcement of Religion in Kaffa, headquarters of the *mukfelleen*. There wasn't much they could do immediately, other than go about smashing and confiscating television sets.

Sedans careened through the streets, screeching to a halt at the sight of a television in a café or a store and disgorging enraged, whip-wielding *mukfelleen* in their distinctive black-and-blue robes.

"We're back, praise God. That was very useful, what the self-defense instructor showed us, wasn't it?"

"Most helpful," said Azade's co-hostess. "Now I might actually look forward to Ramadan."

"I'm certainly going to get a big brass tray with handles to use as a shield. Now, our next guest has written a book. Needless to say, you won't find it in the stores. But we'll put a number on the screen, and you can buy it over the phone. They'll mail it to you in a plain wrapper."

"What's the book called, Azade? You make me eager to read it already."

"It's called *The Repression of Women in Arab Societies—And What You Can Do About It*."

"God be praised. What's it about?"

The studio audience laughed.

"Well, it's not a cookbook, I can tell you."

Chop Chop Square, TVMatar's prime-time soap opera about a royal family in an unnamed country that looked uncannily like Wasabia, had its premiere in the 8:00 P.M. slot and had been denounced from 500 mosques by dawn the next day. Bobby, looking even more sleepless than usual, reported that the grand mullah of Muk, Wasabia's leading religious authority, and certainly no cream puff, was preparing to issue "the mama of all fatwas."

"Well," Laila said, drawing on a cigarette, "that'll melt the wax in Gazzy's ears."

Laila seemed to be reveling in it all. Florence ascribed this less to the Wasabi fury than to the predicament into which it had thrust her husband, the emir. Laila confided to her that there had been a rather royal scene the night before.

"What are you and that American woman doing, in the name of God the most merciful?" the emir had demanded. "Tallulah himself has called me—thrice. You might have informed me about the content of this ... this television station of yours. And hers. Who is she, anyway? I hear things about her."

"She's a very shrewd businesswoman. Would you like to see the projected revenues? Here."

"Um. Are these ... true?"

"So is this." Laila handed him a clipping from *al-Ahram*, the pan-Arabic newspaper. The headline said, "IS THE 'PUD-DING OF MATAR' THE NEW SALADIN?"

The story had been written by Rick, placed by George, and paid for by Bobby. It began, "TVMatar, the new satellite-television station based in Amo-Amas, comes with a bold agenda, and is causing speculation throughout the region that Emir bin Haz, until now thought to be content merely

to rake in his Churchillian riches and disport himself at his 'winter palace,' has a heart that, contrary to reports of faintness, appears to beat strongly indeed."

"Hmm," Gazzy said, frowning.

"My lord doesn't seem pleased."

"Pudding of Matar!"

"Darling, they're calling you the new Saladin, for heaven's sake. Accept the compliment."

"Well, this is your thing, not mine. But it's got all Wasabia in a fury."

"But you detest the Wasabis. And it's going to make you one of the richest men in the Gulf. If there's a problem, I'm missing it."

"I'll have to discuss it with my ministers."

"I'm sure they'll be full of wisdom, and you will emerge wiser than ever."

"God be praised," Gazzy growled, "there are times when I wonder if I mated with a she-devil!"

"You used to say that to me in bed. Our first night, at the Connaught? Oh, what a lion was my lord," she teased tenderly, stroking his cheek.

He stomped off to continue his growling in private. Yet he was also tempted to smile, for this projected advertising-revenue stream was indeed like a gush of sweet water in the baking sand of the desert. And it was pleasant enough to be called the new Saladin, even if he was not quite clear who the infidel was.

M*ukfellahs*—TVMatar's new sitcom about an inept if ruthless squad of Wasabi-type religious police—caused an immediate sensation throughout the region. One television critic called it *Friends From Hell*.

The opening episode showed the six regulars all relaxing back at the office after a hard day of whipping women for a variety of offenses, complaining about how their arms hurt and passing around ibuprofen.

"Praise God, that last one put up a struggle. But that will teach her to walk on the sidewalk without a male escort."

"We live in a shameful world, brothers. If it were not for us, hell would be full to bursting."

"My arm, how it aches! Five hundred lashes I dealt today. And I have three stonings tomorrow."

"Listen to Mansour! He whimpers like that woman at the mall today!"

"God's mercy upon us!" declared one, who had been reading the label on the bottle of ibuprofen. "These are made by a company named Pfutzer!"

"So?"

"It's Jewish, you fool!"

"No. German. Surely."

"Do you want to take that chance?" He thrust his finger down his throat and ran off camera, making terrible sounds.

The rest stared at each other and then suddenly plunged their fingers down their throats and ran off camera.

"Clever," Florence said, "the way it deals so subtly with the issue of anti-Semitism."

"Yeah," Rick said. "I was sort of pleased with that too."

Two weeks later ...

Here's what we know," Bobby said, phoning in to the station. "We just received word that Princess Hamzin, King Tallulah's second wife, busted into the king's council meeting in Kaffa yesterday. The last time something like that happened in that country, there were still dinosaurs. And as if that wasn't bad enough, she was wearing *no* veil, and pants. *Pants*. And as if *that* wasn't bad enough, she started lecturing the king and his council about improving the lot of women in the royal kingdom. Appears the princess is a real fan of TVMatar. The king was reportedly taken to the hospital with chest pains."

"It's begun, then," Florence said. "The revolt of the Arab women. This is great news."

"I'd say that depends on your definition of 'great.' The Wasabis are madder'n adders. Our birds are picking up all sorts of chatter. We're hearing references to lapidation in the chatter."

"Lapidation? Stoning?"

"This wasn't exactly the brightest thing she could've done. Embarrass her husband, the king, in front of all his ministers? Hell, I wouldn't do that back home in Alabama."

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying that Princess Hamzin is in for a real rough ride."

"We can't just abandon her, Bobby."

"What do you mean? She's not working for us."

"But this is our fight. This is our revolution. We started it."

"Wait a minute. We didn't tell her to storm into her husband's meeting and give everyone the finger."

"Have you ever *seen* a lapidation?"

"Well, no, but what's that got to do with it?"

"I have. A video clip, anyway. She couldn't have been older than nineteen. Adultery. They use small stones, so it takes longer. It was awful, Bobby."

"I don't doubt it for a second. But look, Flo, we got to keep our eye on the big picture here. You go public with somethin' like this, and they're going to know *exactly* how you got the information, and this whole thing is going to come down on your head."

"Bobby, this is the moment. We can't back down now. We can't just leave her to die."

"Goddammit, girl, what did you *think* was going to happen? That broadcasting all this feminist crap into a kingdom that's still back in the fourteenth century was going to result in some *conference* or somethin'? That there'd be *panel discussions*, with everyone wearing nametags? And they'd say, 'Oh, why, you're quite right, wise American lady, you're absolutely right, we shouldn't be persecutin' our women like this. How

medieval of us! Okay, ladies, throw away your veils, this way to the driver's-license window. And just to demonstrate how liberal we're gonna be—we're not even gonna chop off your little heads anymore! Is that how you thought this was going to play out? This is the Middle East. The cradle of destabilization, mother of all tar babies, the planet's longest-running argument. Don't you understand that since the dawn of time, startin' with the Garden of Eden, *nothing has ever gone right here?* And that nothing ever will go right here?"

"Then what are we doing here?"

"Well, from the looks of it, fuckin' things up even worse. But at least we're consistent. That ought to be our motto: 'U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Since 1920, Making Matters Worse.' Flo? You there? Talk to me, Florence. Flo! Dammit, girl ..."

But Florence had hung up. She called Laila. "I have to

see you. It's urgent. Chartwell Mall, by the Starbucks. I'll be outside by the ficus tree."

Florence, in disguise, watched through the mesh opening in her veil. Presently a woman, also dressed head to toe in a white *abaaya*, approached, looking around uncertainly.

"Laila—it's me."

"God be praised. Look at us both. I feel like a guest on *Cher Azade*."

They sat by the ficus tree as the bourgeoisie—haute, middle, and low—of Matar ambulated past in the Muzak hush of the mall.

"I lost my bodyguards by slipping out the back of the dressing room at Ralph Lauren. They are inept. God forbid someone should actually try to assassinate me. Well, what's all this enormous urgency about?"

Florence told Laila about Princess Hamzin. Laila absorbed the news in silence.

"I met Hamzin once," she said. "She's the prettiest of Tallulah's wives—not that that will help her. What on earth was she thinking?" Laila sighed. Her head turned toward the Starbucks. "Hundreds of years ago—perhaps a thousand—this area right here was a *souk*. Teeming with merchants and ships and caravans. Some of the first coffee ever drunk by Europeans passed through here. Now we have Starbucks. Thus do we progress. Well, Florence, I must say you seem to be very well informed about all sorts of things. What else do you have to tell me outside Starbucks? Have you got me mixed up in some sort of CIA operation after all?"

"I'm sorry, Laila. I'd been looking for the right moment to tell you."

"It's not that I hadn't wondered," Laila said, in a slightly softer tone. "It did *occur*. I mean, I'm not a fool."

They sat without speaking for a while.

"I can arrange to get you and your son out of the country," Florence said.

Laila stood. "Thank you, but I really think you've been enough help as it is."

"Good evening. I'm Fatima Sham, and this is TVMatar's *Six O'Clock Report*. Princess Hamzin, second wife of King Tallulah of Wasabia, has been sentenced to death by stoning. Her crime: petitioning her husband and his ministers for basic women's rights. I spoke this afternoon by telephone with Prince Jerbil al-Jakar, Minister of Wasabi External Affairs."

"This is a monstrous lie. There is no truth at all to it. It is lies. All lies!"

"Will you make the princess available for an interview with us?"

"The royal household does not give interviews. No, this is a gross provocation. This is an attempt to interfere in our sovereign affairs. This will not succeed. No, no."

BAMBOO

Bamboo talks.

It can't keep secrets,

likes to speak its mind,

always lets you know what's happening

in its rooted brakes and colonies,

takes its topics from black topsoil and river muck

bringing the underground to light;

and because it lingers for years between flowerings,

it scrapes one stalk against another

like cricket legs or rhythm sticks

to pass the time with music—

that is,

when it isn't busy jiving with wind

or chatting with a little bird

or talking shop with clumpgrass

or whispering to itself

or buttonholing strollers, insisting:

Cut me down,

make me into a flute.

Bamboo talks.

Sometimes it sings.

All you need to do is listen.

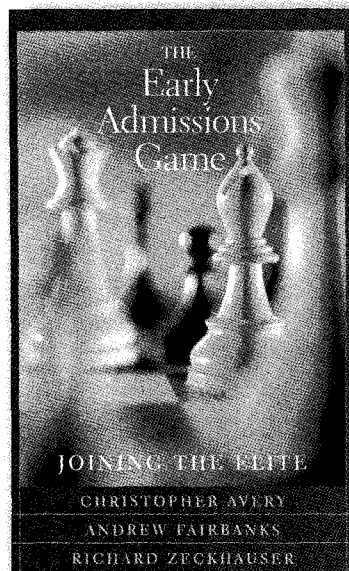
—DAVID SOLWAY

David Solway's recent books include *Franklin's Passage* (2003), a collection of poems, and *Director's Cut* (2003), a volume of literary criticism. He lives in Quebec.

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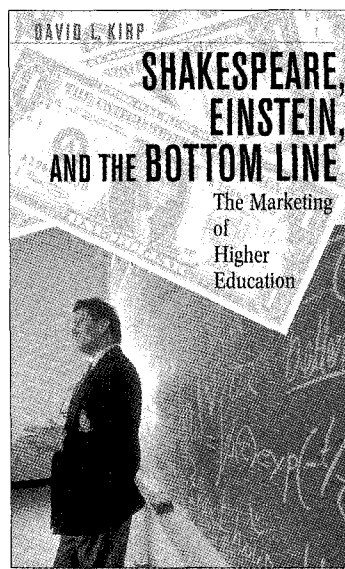
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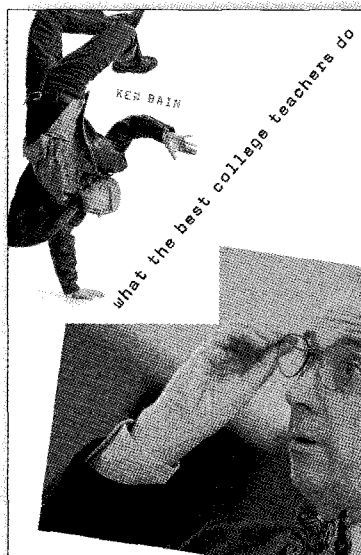
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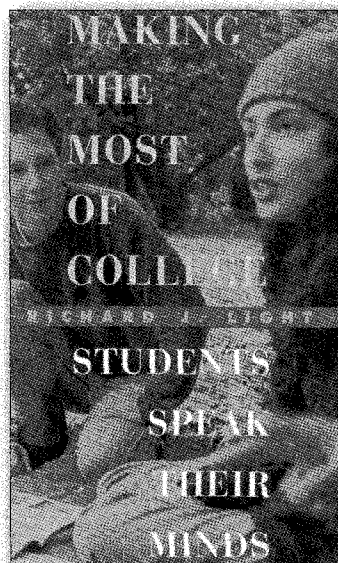
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"Can you at least produce proof that the princess is alive?"

"Of course she is alive! Everyone is alive! Good night to you, madame!"

There followed the sound of a phone being slammed down.

"That was Prince Jerbil al-Jakar, Minister of Wasabi External Affairs," Fatima continued. "The Wasabi practice when stoning women to death is to match the size of the stones to the severity of the offense. In cases of adultery small stones are used, to prolong the execution. It is not known what size stones might be used on a royal wife for the crime of petitioning to improve the situation of women. I spoke with Grand Mufti Adman Ifkir, one of Wasabia's leading religious authorities."

"Grand Mufti Adman, thank you for speaking with TVMatar."

"Yes, I am here. God be praised."

"This sounds like a very serious offense Princess Hamzin has committed."

"Oh, most serious, most serious. There can be no punishment severe enough."

"What about stoning? That's pretty severe."

***Mukfellahs*—TVMatar's new sitcom about an inept if ruthless squad of Wasabi-type religious police—caused an immediate sensation throughout the region. One television critic called it *Friends From Hell*.**

"Only if you use very small stones."

"Why not just cut off her head?"

"No, no, no. That is too quick. Too quick."

"So what size stones would you recommend?"

"The smallest. Like this. These are the best. Like the ones we throw at Satan in Mecca during the *hajj*."

"Those *are* small. Wouldn't it take a very long time to kill a woman with stones that small?"

"Yes. That is the point. It's a mercy. It gives her time to repent of her crime."

"Thank you for taking time to speak with us."

"You are welcome."

Florence spoke through the intercom into Fatima's earpiece: "That'll get their attention. Good interviews."

"Florence," said a control-room assistant. "Sheikha Laila. Line two."

"Christ, Florence," Laila said. "What are you *doing*?"

"What I came here to do."

"Does that include destabilizing the entire region? Giving Wasabia an excuse to invade us? And you—you'll be long gone, won't you? Last seen climbing aboard an American helicopter." She hung up before Florence could answer.

Rattled, Florence decided to check in. She dialed Uncle Sam. The phone rang several times, and then a recorded voice told her she had reached a nonworking number. They were destroying the connective tissue. She was alone.

Good afternoon, from the TVMatar newsroom in Amo-Amas, I'm Fatima Sham. A source close to the Wasabi royal family has confirmed to TVMatar that Princess Hamzin was indeed sentenced to death by stoning for the crime of disrespect. He further confirms that because of mounting international outrage, the royal household is attempting a cover-up. Last night, according to our source, the princess was drugged and put aboard a Royal Wasabi Air Force plane and flown to Paris, where a shopping expedition was staged. Here is footage of the princess ostensibly examining a diamond ring. We bring you this exclusive interview with a Kaffa palace insider. Because he fears for his life, we agreed not to show his face and to identify him only as 'Abdul.' Can you tell us what happened?"

"They were going to stone my lady to death. With little small stones. Oh, terrible. Then came the news on the television—praise God! Then one of King Tallulah's ministers became fearful and said, 'Oh, this will make a terrible, terrible impression! We must wait and kill her

when no one is paying attention.' So they came with big needles filled with drugs and stuck her, like this." Abdul jabbed his arm. "And took her on a plane to Paris."

"How do you know this?"

"I was there! I saw! And there was a French person."

"What French person?"

"Oh, very French. An old French person with gray hair. He has been in the palace here many times. The royals listen to him all the time. They think everything French is good. He tells them what to do and they do it. He tells them, 'Bring her to Paris, we will make it look like a shopping.'"

"So you're saying the television images of the princess shopping were all fixed, to make it look like she's in no danger?"

"Yes, yes! But she is in great danger! Still! When no one is paying attention, they will kill her. My poor lady!"

"Abdul, thank you for telling us this. You're very courageous to come forward. One final question: You say the French are influencing—indeed, controlling—the royal household?"

"Yes. Many times I have listened to the princes and the king on the telephone, many times with the French, saying, 'You must help us get back our coastline that the English villain Churchill took from us. We will give you oil and navy bases.' Many times I have heard these conversations. Many, many times."

"Thank you. God keep you safe. When we return, we'll have a report from our correspondent in Paris."

As the news continued, Abdul, the Kaffa palace insider, returned to his job downstairs in the cafeteria.

"Welcome back to TVMatar news. I'm Fatima Sham. We now bring you this exclusive report from Rita Ferreira, our Paris-bureau correspondent."

"Yes, Fatima, I'm standing outside the gates of the Onzième Bureau, a little-known branch of the French intelligence service. We tried to speak to officials here about a report that they have been funneling money secretly to Matar's mullahs, in an attempt to start a coup in the tranquil Gulf nation and to replace its benevolent and popular ruler, the Emir Gazzir bin Haz, with a fundamentalist Islamic dictatorship."

The screen showed the reporter trying to thrust a microphone through the window of a dark sedan driving out the gate.

"TVMatar, hello! *Bonjour!* Is it true that you are trying to start a revolution in Matar?"

The car kept going. The screen showed two gendarmes approaching, waving the camera away.

"Allez! Allez!"

"We are with TVMatar, here to ask questions."

"No questions. You must go away. Go. Go now."

"But we want to speak with someone from the Onzième Bureau, to ask about their plans to destabilize our country."

"You must ask at the Foreign Bureau. *Allez.*"

An hour later ...

"I think," Laila said over the phone, "that you'd better get over here to the palace. The French ambassador has requested an audience. The new Saladin's spine could use some stiffening. It's the only part of him that isn't normally stiff. I'll send a car."

Florence was driven through the quiet, baking streets of Amo-Amas to the palace. She walked on lapis-lazuli tiles past cool alabaster fountains and shaded terraces and mosaic corridors, past bodyguards in ceremonial dress, and on into the emir's audience room, where the Lion of Matar awaited. The Lion was frowning. Laila, too, was there.

"Well, Miss Intrigue," he said, "you've made me very popular. Everyone suddenly wants a meeting with me. The French ambassador, the Wasabi ambassador, your American ambassador, even the Russian ambassador. What can he want, I wonder? I should just invite them in all at once. It's been a long time since we have held a grand diplomatic audience. I don't know whether to thank you or have you deported. I could have you escorted to the Wasabi border and thrown across. I'm sure King Tallulah would be delighted to have you as his guest."

"I regret having caused His Majesty such consternation."

"Oh, pish. Now what's this about the French trying to buy my mullahs? Is this true?"

"Yes."

"And how do you know this arresting fact?"

"I'm in the news-gathering business."

"Are you with the CIA? I want an honest answer now."

"Not that I am aware, my lord."

The emir stared. "What do you mean, not that you're aware? What kind of answer is that?"

"An honest answer. I really *don't* know anymore. So now it would seem that I'm an employee of TVMatar. Which is to say, I work for you."

"Stop throwing sand in my eyes. I want an answer!"

"Darling," Laila said, "calm yourself. You'll give yourself a rash. Though I must admit, I'm confused too. But TVMatar is now fully independent. You own it, darling. Moreover, you're doing very, very well with it. You're now the largest broadcaster in the Arab world."

"Yes, yes, yes, but was this funded by American intelligence?"

"Darling," Laila said, "if it had been, do you really think it would have worked this well?"

"Good point," Florence muttered.

"I hardly know that it's turned out 'well,'" the emir said. "And don't try to deceive me with your honeyed tongues. I want to know—right now, this instant—was this an American operation?"

"Yes," Florence said. "I regret deceiving you. But I do not regret what we have accomplished."

The emir looked from Florence to his wife. "Did you know about this?"

"No," Florence said. "I deceived Laila, too. I deceived you both."

The emir sat back on his divan and tapped his purplish lip with his finger.

Laila glanced at Florence. "Are you still a U.S. agent?" she asked.

Florence imagined she was giving a press briefing at the State Department. *I have nothing for you on that at this time.*

"Florence?"

"No. No, I don't think I am at this point."

Laila turned to the emir. "There. So why the fuss?"

"If I find," the emir said, "that you two were in collusion, there will be consequences. Severe consequences."

"Shouldn't we give some thought to what you're going to tell Monsieur Valmar?"

In due course the French ambassador was announced. Laila and Florence withdrew by a separate door before he was ushered in.

"You might have given me some warning that you were about to admit to being an American spy," Laila said crossly.

"Not a spy, Laila. I was never that."

"Whatever. Well, the situation seems to have stabilized for the time being. But *au revoir*, Switzerland of the Gulf."

"Yes," Florence said. "It's starting to feel more like the Middle East." ▀

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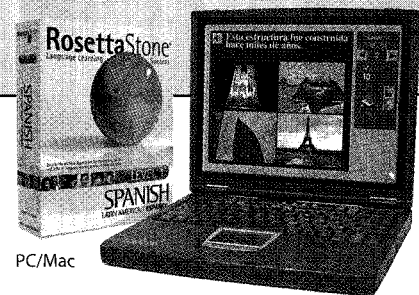
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BOOKS & CRITICS

OCTOBER 2004 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

THIS MONTH:

A Gloom of One's Own

In her review of *The Bitch in the House*, edited by Cathi Hanauer, and *The Bastard on the Couch*, edited by Daniel Jones, Sandra Tsing Loh finds, "The fact is, someone has to be June Cleaver some of the time. Otherwise we've got an unloved nation of Wards."

PAGE 165

No Way, Madame Bovary

Margaret Mauldon's new translation of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is no doubt "a labor of love," Clive James writes. "But affection and affectation don't sit well together."

PAGE 175

Rote From Underground

A reading list of progressive books that—like Michael Moore—(ought to) make progressives wince, by Marc Cooper

PAGE 179

The Real Thing

Joseph O'Neill reviews *A Bit on the Side*, by William Trevor

PAGE 185

Mind the Gap

Orhan Pamuk's previous novel made him "a kind of register" of the view that Turkey is "the 'bridge' between East and West," Christopher Hitchens writes. But *Snow*, Pamuk's new novel, suggests that the author "is far more ambivalent about this 'bridge-building' stuff than he has so far let on."

PAGE 188

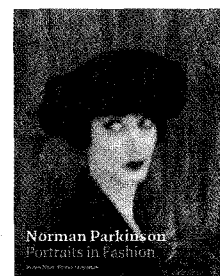
EDITOR'S CHOICE

The Glass of Fashion

What to read this month—and what not to

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

After four lackluster years at Westminster, Norman Parkinson started his career in 1931 as an apprentice in the studios of a staid court photographer. By the end of the decade he had revolutionized the look of fashion pictures. Models had previously appeared cold, static, and studied; Parkinson aimed to "unbolt their knees," and to suggest action and playfulness by taking "moving pictures with a still camera"—nothing like his snap of Pamela Minchin in sunglasses and a 1939 Fortnum and Mason swimsuit, leaping arms outstretched in front of the breakwaters on the Isle of Wight, had ever been seen in the fashion magazines. He got them out of the studio and onto the street, where he seemed to have caught them on the way to work (or at least a lunch date); into the muck of farm fields; and even onto the backs of ostriches and among herds of slumbering wild elephants (Parkinson pioneered the use of outdoor color photography and exotic locales in fashion shots). His style of "action realism" gave fashion photography not merely a sense of movement but an almost innocent exuberance (his 1955 picture *New York, New York*, of a joyful, sprinting Manhattan couple, epitomized the hopefulness of postwar young marrieds). But what made Parkinson a great photographer was his adoration—and, more important, admiration—of women (thanks probably to his closeness as a boy to his geriatric great-aunts and his indulgent mother), whom he knew to be the superior sex: "They are more courageous, more industrious, more honest, more direct," he said—unpredictable adjectives coming from a man whose profession concentrated on women's appearance. More than any other photographer, he captured the charm, intelligence, and humor of great feminine beauty, qualities abundantly on display here in his shots—taken from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s—of the model and stage actress Wenda Rogerson, whom he married in 1947. (Rogerson was his third wife; they remained married until her death, forty years later.) As a model, Rogerson, in her Simpson's suits and cashmere sweater sets, wearing sensible shoes or posed with an open umbrella by her side in the fog

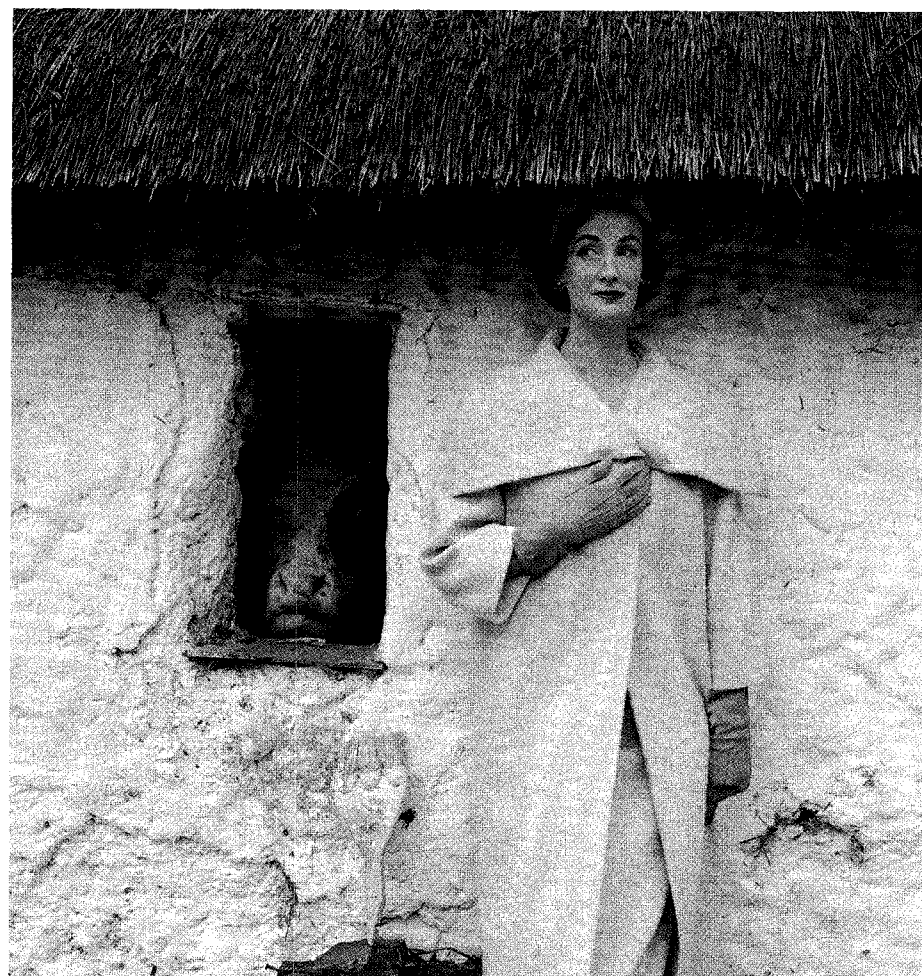


NORMAN PARKINSON:
PORTRAITS IN
FASHION

by Robin Muir
Trafalgar Square



near Hyde Park Corner (an iconic image of the lingering sophistication of postwar London), had the astonishing ability to look at once cool and warm, elegant and jaunty; above all, she brought what she called a “witty underplay” to his pictures. Theirs is simply the most successful collaboration of photographer and model in the history of fashion, beside which the partnerships of David Bailey and Jean Shrimpton, and even Irving Penn and Lisa Fonssagrives, pale. Parkinson died in 1990, and his most profession-



Photos of Wenda Rogerson by Norman Parkinson

ally successful decades were his last three; but the book is divided into chapters by decade, and I found my interest flagging in the 1960s and diminished entirely in the 1970s and 1980s, as his photos, in keeping with the times, grew increasingly garish and outrageous—and as he, with his upturned moustache, in the too many photos with his models reproduced here, increasingly resembled a raffish, even louche, Indian Army colonel. (In fairness, Parkinson seems to have lost much of his enthusiasm for fashion photography after moving to Tobago, in 1963; he grew far more interested in portraiture, and became the Queen Mother’s favorite photographer.) But nothing can diminish his earlier work. Parkinson always insisted that he was a craftsman, not an artist, and he’d have dismissed the critic John Russell Taylor’s assessment that he was Sargent’s “logical successor.” We shouldn’t.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Defending Israel, by Martin Van Creveld (St. Martin’s). Like all other honest assessments of Israel’s strategic situation, this slim book offers no support to either hawks or doves, or to either the Israeli or the Arab positions, as conventionally defined. The best-known and arguably the most highly respected civilian commentator on Israel’s military affairs, Van Creveld coolly analyzes the country’s security policy and geostrategy. He concludes that Israel’s military preponderance over its Arab neighbors is stronger than ever, and is in fact growing. He further shows that—providing Israel deploys sensing and surveillance technologies at its disposal—its withdrawal from the occupied territories will enhance, not vitiate, its security. But he also convincingly demonstrates that unless it builds a security wall (bolstered, again, by high-tech sensors, and roughly following the pre-1967 border), Israel “will almost certainly

be destroyed” by Palestinian terrorism and the growth of its Arab population. (Palestinians, he points out, are in fact already exercising the “right of return” by marrying and having children with Israel’s Arab citizens. Of course, even if a wall blocks a de facto right of return, Israel’s Arab citizens already make up about 20 percent of its population. This large and rapidly growing hostile group within its pre-1967 borders represents a long-term and potentially catastrophic threat to the Jewish state’s safety, to say nothing of its democracy. Van Creveld doesn’t address this problem, but his response would almost certainly be typically grim: that the existence of a future dire threat is no reason not to forestall a more pressing one.) His strategic appraisal, which Israel’s defense and intelligence establishment widely shares, demolishes the arguments of those who hold that a wall can’t be effective, just as it renders ridiculous the propagandistic view of Israel as David surrounded by Arab Goliaths. Van Creveld has a reputation within Israel as something of a dove. But even as he reveals that much of the rhetoric in discussions of Israel’s borders and of its military balance with the Arab states is unwarrantedly pessimistic, in evaluating Israel’s dismal strategic prospects he concludes by summoning the infamous phrase of Likud’s founder, the clear-eyed and ruthless Zeev Jabotinsky: unless Israel “builds an iron wall” between itself and the Arab world, Van Creveld avers, “it can have no future.” This seems to be the only realistic option, but make no mistake: this is a strategy of no exit.

LITERARY STUDIES

Anthony Powell, by Michael Barber (Overlook). Anthony Powell (pronounced “Pole”) wrote the twentieth century’s greatest English novel of manners, the twelve-volume *A Dance to the Music of Time*, along with a group of sparkling and sadly neglected novels of the 1930s. He also wrote a lot about himself: four books of memoirs and three of journals. Although the memoirs are, characteristically, elaborately unrevealing and the journals bluster-

ingly so, his life has been thoroughly recorded, which eliminates the immediate need for a biography. And Barber can’t dig deeper, because Powell, who died in 1998, rejected him as his official biographer and chose instead Hilary Spurling (whose longtime friendship with the self-destructive and somewhat tawdry Sonia Orwell gives her unusual insight into the world of high bohemia, the cynosure of Powell’s fiction). Because Powell’s (and his wife’s) papers are closed to him, Barber resorts to such lame stratagems as the following: “I should like to say more about Powell’s marriage, but I can’t. What I can do, however, is draw the reader’s attention to how he treats aspects of married life in a couple of reviews.” Powell and his onetime great friend Malcolm Muggeridge agreed that a bore was one who “takes the greatest pleasure in telling you at great lengths what you know already,” and Barber, who tells us nothing new or important about, say, the close and complicated friendships Powell had with George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh (the two English contemporaries whose work he probably admired most), nicely fits that definition here. (To be fair, Barber does assiduously mine Muggeridge’s unpublished diaries, which give some texture to his account of the two writers’ once daily interactions, but the great question regarding their relationship—What reasons lay behind Muggeridge’s nasty 1964 review of Powell’s *The Valley of the Bones*, a piece that ended their deep friendship?—remains unresolved.) Nothing could jar more with Powell’s measured, ironic persona and precise, understated prose than Barber’s clumsy, sophomoric humor (at Oxford “many young men thought it sapiens to be homo”) and slangy, cliché-clotted writing (in a single paragraph he gives us “arm-twisting,” “cross the pond,” “would not take no for an answer,” and “an offer he couldn’t refuse”). One can understand how Powell arrived at his chilly verdict: “An uninspiring figure, to say the least,” he jotted after an interview with Barber. But Barber self-deprecatingly quotes that assessment, and manages throughout to make

his oafishness more endearing than obnoxious. Moreover, he effectively conveys the intricately interconnected milieus of Grub Street, Fitzrovia, and high society between the wars that Powell inhabited, imbued, and made the subject of his fiction, while he synthesizes the memoirs of Powell and his contemporaries, the vast and ever growing secondary literature on literary life in the 1920s and 1930s, and Powell’s semi-autobiographical novels. Despite its conspicuous flaws and lack of critical acuity, Barber’s chronicle is smooth and surprisingly compelling. This is that rare literary specimen: a pretty good bad book.

AMERICAN HISTORY

Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood, by Steven Mintz (Harvard). Beginning in the 1960s, with the once trendy but now somewhat discredited work of Philippe Ariès, the history of childhood has emerged as one of the most creative areas of historical scholarship. Although U.S. historians have lagged behind their British and European counterparts, they’ve nevertheless produced a vast body of specialized studies on everything from children’s reading habits to the political history of playgrounds. This book synthesizes much of that work, although its emphasis is less on the emotional life of children and their families—a notoriously tricky subject that has inspired both the most sophisticated and the most simplistic scholarship—than on what Mintz calls the “public thinking” on childhood. Although clearly written and well organized, the book is weak, owing largely to the scholarly and social agendas Mintz too single-mindedly pursues. He’s intent on showing that childhood (including attitudes toward children) is what he calls “a social and cultural construct” that has changed according to historical circumstances. There’s much truth to that point of view; those, for example, nostalgic for the middle-class childhood of the 1950s and 1960s should bear in mind Mintz’s observation that “[postwar] family patterns—a high birth rate, a stable divorce rate,

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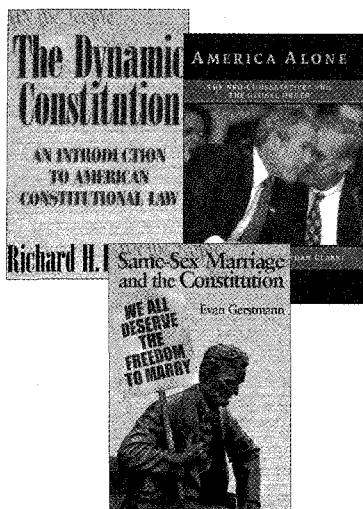
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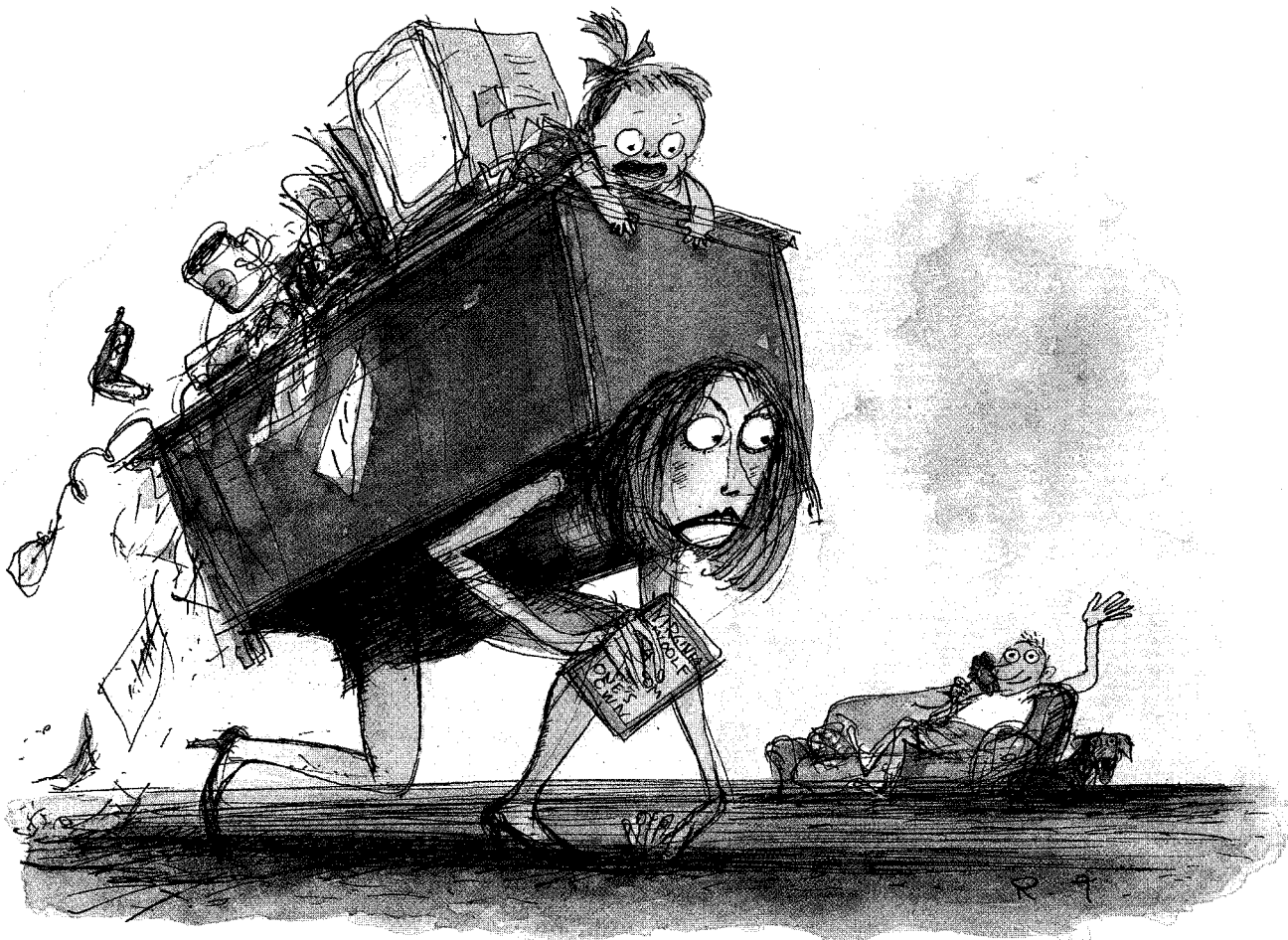
and a low number of mothers in the workforce—were a historical aberration" (though it's a shame he didn't end his sentence there, rather than redundantly elaborating, "out of line with long-term historical trends"). But Mintz overstates his case. He maintains, for example, that until the mid-eighteenth century the death of a child "produced studied resignation" in parents, rather than "powerful anxiety and sorrow." But for decades careful historians have been dismantling this emotionally relativist argument. (In fact, in an unusually subtle and meticulous account the historian Nicholas Orme found that in many essential ways even medieval children were "ourselves, five hundred or a thousand years ago," and that in the Middle Ages parents cherished their children no less, and grieved no less at their loss, than they do today.) But this book is most flawed when Mintz discusses contemporary debates surrounding policy and attitudes toward children, for here he loses his historical objectivity in his socially progressive indignation over what he calls "sanctimonious moralizing." The "tough love" approach to juvenile criminality, for instance, may be misguided and even dangerous, but its emergence is no doubt owing to somewhat complex social, political, and intellectual causes; surely it's not mainly (and nefariously) "a thinly veiled way to target minority and lower-income youths without provoking widespread outcries of racism and class bias"—or if it is, that's a statement that in a work of historical scholarship must be rigorously argued rather than simply asserted. Finally, the solutions Mintz proffers to the problems now besetting too many children ("Government ... can moderate the economic disruption of divorce on children's lives. It can encourage family-friendly workplace policies ... our society can provide the young with meaningful opportunities to contribute to their communities, and provide the young with adult mentoring relationships") leave all the hard questions (such as "How?") unasked and unanswered—and hence are as anodyne as a political party's

campaign platform. But more to the point, why does a scholarly author of a work of history feel impelled to give political prescriptions? Mintz, alas, is merely subscribing to a widespread trend—but it's a trend that should really just cease.

Daily Life in the United States, 1920–1940, by David E. Kyvig (Ivan R. Dee).

Kyvig concentrates on how most Americans (which means primarily members of the middle and lower-middle classes who lived in small cities and towns) went about their everyday lives in a period when the country was being transformed by a national economy and a consumer culture. This is a rich and wide-ranging subject that Sinclair Lewis and John O'Hara dissected in their best novels; that was the focal point for Orson Welles in one of the greatest movies ever made, his adaptation of Booth Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and for Robert and Helen Lynd in their masterpieces of sociology, *Middletown* and *Middletown in Transition*; and that I've been obsessed with for years. So I came to this book expecting nothing new. But in examining the impact of cars, electricity, radio, and the movies on daily life, and in exploring changes in fashion, buying habits, family relations, and religious practices, Kyvig regularly comes up with illuminating details (as late as 1937 more Americans were born at home than in the hospital) and new ways of thinking about familiar subjects (by considering, say, the effect of the development of the school bus on the quality and character of rural education). He previously wrote a masterly account of the repeal of Prohibition, and his treatment here of every aspect of that policy is especially strong (he shows that, contrary to popular wisdom, the Eighteenth Amendment was effective—outside major cities; he estimates that alcohol consumption dropped by more than 60 percent from 1920 to 1933). This is an unusually satisfying book. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and national editor of *The Atlantic*.



BOOKS

A Gloom of One's Own

Demanding women with demanding lives, and the men who love them

BY SANDRA TSING LOH

Full disclosure: I was asked to submit material for *The Bitch in the House*, a 2002 essay collection on female domestic rage. But I declined, because in my house I felt I was already too bitchy. An old new mother (I had my first of two babies at thirty-eight), I was then battling my musician husband—both of us as grim as *Survivor* finalists yanking on the last scrawny chicken leg—over the matter of time, ever shrinking time. How to steal yet more time to type away madly into the night about how angry I was that I never had enough time? Not that I wasn't on edge (in two years I hadn't slept through the night); not that I didn't have material. Indeed, the record shows I'd already penned several furious missives to my husband at 3:00 A.M. (one was sixteen pages long)

that—here's the catch—I do not remember writing. In short, immortalizing my rage in hardcover? It didn't seem the best choice for my family, my loved ones, my body, my self.

Now, of course, I'm slapping my forehead with a Homer Simpson "Doh!" because *The Bitch in the House* went on to become not just a lively, thought-provoking, well-edited book but also a *New York Times* best seller. So what can one say but "Hats off" to its editor, Cathi Hanauer, a fellow frantic working mother who still found time to elegantly plumb the rage—but also the contradictions, vulnerabilities, and foibles—of hard-driven post-feminist women. Hats off also to her husband, Daniel Jones, who has now compiled the knowingly titled *The Bastard on the*

Couch, a men's answer to *The Bitch in the House*. Hanauer and Jones: they're probably team-editing, even as we speak, an extraordinary third volume, full of fresh, provocative writing that will keenly trace my ambivalent feelings about smart, engaging New York couples like themselves (never mind that a despairing squint into their bios reveals Massachusetts), who even with small children continue to be ferociously effective.

But until that book comes out, let non-contributing me slink to my sagging Los Angeles futon with a sixteen-ounce mug of lukewarm coffee and recap for you the report, as I see it, from the front lines of the gender wars encapsulated by these two volumes. "The Bitch in the House" is Hanauer's catchphrase for an ambitious professional woman like herself, who struggles through what Peggy Orenstein, the author of *Flux* (2000), calls a "half-changed world." The good news is that after feminism, women are no longer expected to ape a 1950s-era June Cleaver—or, more literarily, a nineteenth-century Angel in

UPLIFTING READING

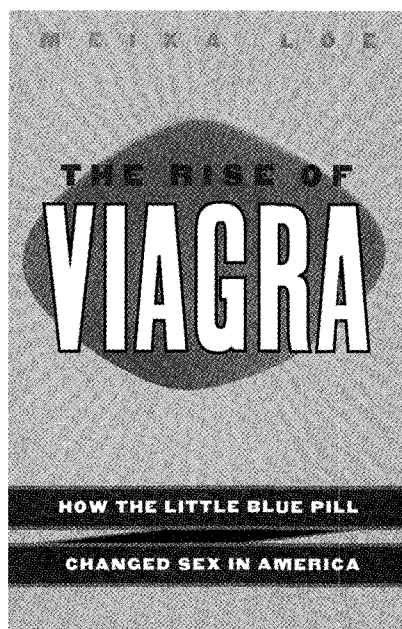
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the House. Penned in 1854 by a fantastically unenlightened Victorian named Coventry Patmore (in his portrait Patmore bears a striking resemblance to a high-collared Victorian poodle), *The Angel in the House*, an ode to Patmore's perfect wife, Emily, offered such a repressive—and potent—female ideal that it drove Virginia Woolf to groan in her essays,

She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draft she sat in it—in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others.

From this Woolf famously concluded, in *A Room of One's Own*, that succeeding as a woman writer required—aside from an annual income of £500 sterling and one's own inviolable space—no less than killing one's inner self-effacing, overly family-needs-focused Angel in the House.

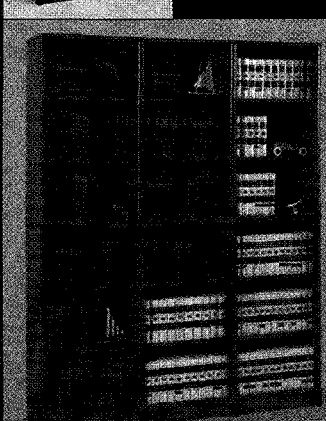
Of course the question today, Hanauer observes, is that if we modern women have everything (careers, money, family, and all the choices that go therewith), why are so many of us—particularly the most privileged among us, she's clear about saying—so full of rage? (Or, to track the metaphor here, now that we've killed the Angel in the House, why is the person who remains so often the Bitch?)

In furious e-mails zigzagging late into the night, Hanauer's female colleagues cited a familiar list of stresses:

Too much to do in too few hours. Not enough help from society and, sometimes, spouses. Invasion of technology into our lives, further accelerating our already fragmented time. Financial responsibility combined with the responsibility and inherent desires of motherhood. The wish, regardless of financial responsibility, to have a fulfilling career, for which we've prepared all our lives. Pressure ... to look not only flawless but younger than we actually are. Lack of role models in our lives for what we're trying to do ... The ideas and belief ... that we should have it all, do it all, be it all, and be Happy. And if we're not, by God, something is wrong.

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But let's get back to the men—what's wrong with the men. Never mind the whipsaw effects of society, technology, and culture. At home the mystery for progressive-minded women continues to be "Why, even when we make a point of marrying Coventry Patmore's polar opposite (that card-carrying post-feminist good guy who cheerfully agrees to do 50 percent of the housework), is the result still a war zone of bitterness, chaos, and strife?" Mundanely enough, as most of the fifty-three embedded journalists in *Bitch* and *Bastard* testify, the problem is often that even the most well-intentioned men and women seem

all but biologically unable to agree on what 50 percent of the labor actually is. This is a problem above and beyond, say, the eternal conflict between those who soak their dishes overnight and those who'd sooner jump off a cliff than wake up to a dirty kitchen (never mind the Talmudic debate in our household over knife points up or down in the dishwasher). Bountiful anecdotal evidence describes a dashing-off-to-work wife giving her lazy Bastard what she considers half a to-do list, whereas by the husband's calculation in the "half" the Bitch gave him represents what's needed times four (a gender imbalance perhaps most hilariously described by the happily shirking, CNN-watching Christopher Russell in "My List of Chores").

Which is not to say that the men don't admire (sort of) the ridiculously high standards the women cleave to. In "Why My Kids Like Me," Steven Rinehart comments on how low he has set his own bar: "I mostly practice my parenting out of my wife's earshot, similar to the way I practiced trombone in junior high." He continues,

Just about every one of [the women] could use a personal assistant to help them run their lives, and you can't really say that about the men, even the ones who, like me, bust their asses with a forty-plus-hour workweek, do

most of the cooking, and have forsaken the Dagwood Sunday-morning nap on the couch as a quaint custom in the same league as whittling. We don't need assistants; when push comes to shove, we just become the weak link. Our wives can fume and fret about the details; we buy the kids junk food and take them to Adam Sandler movies. Someone has to stop and smell the rose-scented Hello Kitty lip gloss and ogle the ninety-five-dollar Yu-Gi-Oh cards behind the glass of the display case, and we're just the guys to do it.

Indeed, to hear them tell it, the Bastards don't just stop to smell the lip gloss; they play guitar, drink gin, chop wood, listen to the blues, and

wax poetic about lovable dogs they have known (lovable, underachieving dogs). Compared with their frantic, trying-to-have-it-all wives (several of the essayists are husbands of contributing Bitches), the Bastards swing more yin than yang, defiantly celebrating the couch (see Ron Carlson's lovely essay, "Men in Houses"), the overall vibe becoming by the end, yes, just a little bit groovy, just a little bit shaggy-haired, just a little bit *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Driving obediently to the supermarket, to-do lists in

hand, the Bastards meditate—hard—on the difficult but necessary art of surrendering power (Fred Leebron's "I Am Man, Hear Me Bleat," Manny Howard's "Embracing the Little Steering Wheel"). From a metaphorical—or sometimes not so metaphorical—cabin in the woods they contemplate, with some awe and no little affection, the brilliant urban women they've known, both wives and exes. Never mind that these women come across largely as type-A control freaks who, given a minute, would rather read a book than have sex (as in Sean Elder's "The Lock Box").

Of course, *Bitch's* essayists include a heavy sampling of women from the top echelons of publishing: the executive editors of both *Elle* and *Glamour* contributed, as did highly placed staffers at Random House, W. W. Norton, *The*

THE BITCH IN THE HOUSE:
26 Women Tell the Truth About Sex, Solitude, Work, Motherhood, and Marriage

edited by Cathi Hanauer
Perennial

THE BASTARD ON THE COUCH:
27 Men Try Really Hard to Explain Their Feelings About Love, Loss, Fatherhood, and Freedom

edited by Daniel Jones
William Morrow

IS UNCLE SAM BECOMING BIG BROTHER?

FORTRESS AMERICA

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by MATTHEW BRZEZINSKI

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New York Times, and *Vanity Fair*. This is one reason the writing is so consistently revealing and fine. Consider the lyrical ending to the then *Glamour* chief Kristin van Ogtrop's "Attila the Honey I'm Home."

I will never be able to share the surprise [my kids] feel when they find a cicada in the grass, because stopping to marvel at the cicada means I will miss my morning train ... I will long for a time when I will never yell at my kids just because I am late ... Because before I know it, my boys will be grown ... Four little feet jumping on the bed will be a distant memory. And things like cicadas will have lost their magic, and my children will be gone for good.

However, cutting back at work is never considered an option—even if the work schedule requires leaving home at 5:30 A.M. and getting back after seven at night. (In an eerie, fascinating comment on our times, Van Ogtrop is now the managing editor of *Real Simple* magazine.) God may strike me dead (particularly if God is a she), but by the end of *Bitch* and *Bastard* I had the nagging feeling that if these books are any indication, today's post-feminist women could learn a thing or two from today's post-feminist men, not the other way around. I mean, in *Bitch*, "Deadlines, deadlines, deadlines!" is the ever present and unquestioned backbeat that drives much of the domestic conflict, scattering husbands, children, and pets. With New York women this extraordinarily industrious (I picture rumpled Jil Sander jackets, feverish typing, a massive digital clock ticking down the seconds), it seems like eons ago (well, the 1970s) that the female Manhattanite Fran Lebowitz lay around her apartment and penned her immortal—and, come to think of it, not all that rageful—"My Life: An Introduction of Sorts" (sample entry: "3:40 p.m. I consider getting out of bed. I reject the notion as being unduly vigorous. I read and smoke a bit more").

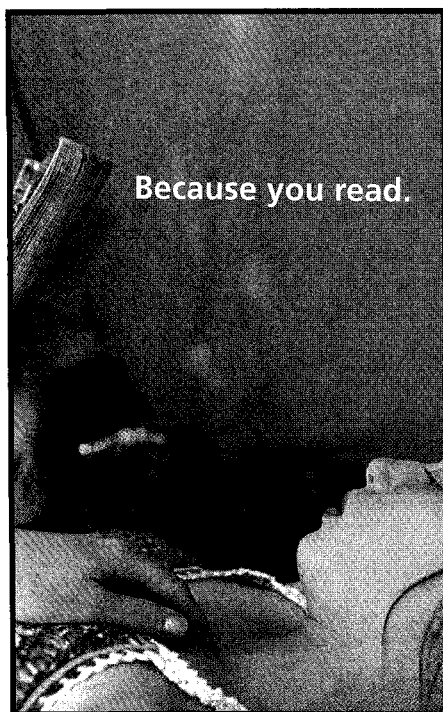
Of course, I realize it's fine for me—the Bitch on the Futon—to carp away long after the fact from my remote post in California; amazingly disciplined editrix supermom or no, Hanauer was limited to publishing the

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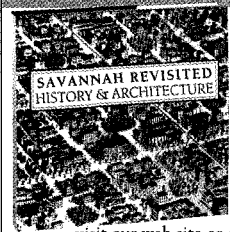


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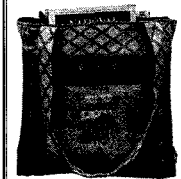


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essays of writers who actually wrote them. (Listen to me, shrilling faintly in the background: "But who will speak for the women too lazy to write?") So, having in effect missed my deadline by several years now, but having at least slept a few nights, let me add my own small footnote to the *Bitch in the House* discussion. In her "Memoirs of an Ex-Bride," Daphne Merkin, while describing her disappointment in the institution of marriage, writes, "Oh, I imagine once upon a time I had an honest-to-goodness Marriage Fantasy, just as I had a Wedding Fantasy, in which I featured as a tiny-waisted Barbie doll-bride, standing on top of a lacy white cake: true love anointed in a swirl of buttercream frosting and candied violets." Yes, after the wedding comes marriage and then babies and then motherhood—easy as that. Such rosy ideals of femalehood are a sham, post-feminist women agree; they do little to prepare us for the hours, the tedium, and the exhaustion, not to mention the wave of useless men.

But what I'd like to know is, aren't there women out there who've ever been disappointed by *work*? Just as Merkin had her Wedding Fantasy, I have always secretly nurtured an Overnight Success Fantasy, which typically involves winning a MacArthur genius grant at age twenty-five (that would have been seventeen years ago now), my version of Woolf's fortuitous £500 a year. Not stopping with a simple room of my own, in my fantasy I, too, see a frosted cake with candied violets: on top is a perfect, tiny-waisted doll who looks suspiciously like Amy Tan clutching a Barbie-size National Book Award. Fawning critics surround her in a sugary clamshell, fringed by manicured rose beds bulging with dollars, and perhaps a camera crew from some admiring PBS documentary!

I compare that with what the freelance writer's life really feels like to me, at forty-two: less creamy cake top and more skanky roadhouse, where a haggard, friendless, not-so-tiny-waisted woman in a too tight pleather skirt is constantly jilted by a series of faithless lovers and left showering in the motel. I could open my address book and

LAURA KIPNIS

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a polemic

“Will all the adulterers in the room please stand up? This means all you cheating wives, philandering husbands, and straying domestic partners, past, present, and future. Those who find themselves fantasizing a lot, please rise also. So may those who have ever played supporting roles in the adultery melodrama: 'other man,' 'other woman,' suspicious spouse or marital detective ('I called your office at three and they said you'd left!'), or least fun of all, the miserable cuckold or cuckoldess. Which, of course, you may be, without (at least, consciously) knowing that you are. Feel free to take a second to mull this over, or to make a quick call: 'Hi hon, just checking in!'”

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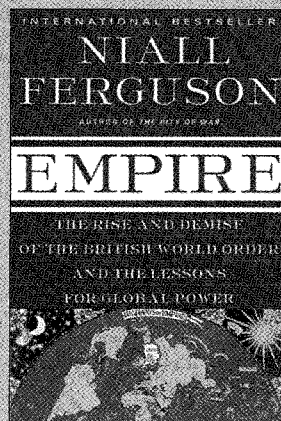
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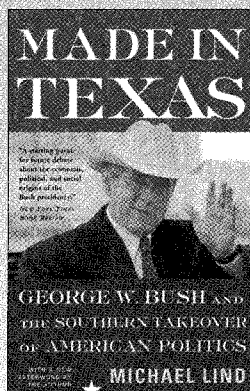
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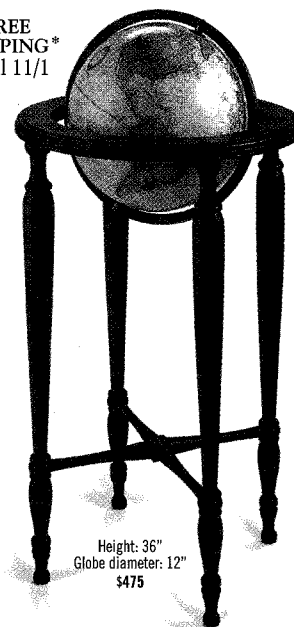
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show you the trail of phone numbers—oh, look, here's the number of a powerful Condé Nast editor who actually contributed an essay to *Bitch*! She complains of child-care problems! Housework problems! Perhaps that's what was irritating her when she brutally killed my piece! As a post-feminist working mother parsing the chaos midway through the dark forest of her life, I realize that work has felt less the thing that continually built my self-esteem than that which continually called it into question. For me, not family but work has been the uncontrollable emotional seesaw: one day you're as swollen as a tick with your genius, the next day you're humiliated by the spectacle of your ludicrous flailings. When you do publish a book, what you thought would be your fabulous coming-out party feels instead like being shot by firing squad over and over again.

It could just be my generation of women, our mouths open in a neurotic howl of *Who is my self? What is my identity? Me me me! Who who who? Why why why?*—what I like to call sharp attacks of keening Po Bronsonalia. But Virginia Woolf, the patron saint of modern literary women (and, of course, another woman in publishing), wasn't much calmer. Although she lived—lucky her—before the age of instant Amazon.com ratings and the once ever hovering million-dollar lottery ticket of Oprah's Book Club, when you read Woolf's diaries, you see her, too, fretting about her career's grinding mechanics: the rising and falling book sales, the eternal pounding-out of income from her articles, the wavering esteem of olde frostykins T. S. Eliot, the irritating rejections (even from—yes, and thanks a lot—*The Atlantic*). Woolf devours every new review, feels subsequent triumph or defeat, and loathes herself for being so vulnerable. (I couldn't help noticing that the back of my edition of her diaries is topped, without irony, by a large, buoyant quotation: "I get courage by reading Virginia Woolf's *A Writer's Diary*. You must read this diary.—*Sylvia Plath*.") In one of Woolf's last diary entries, three weeks before she put a stone in her pocket and disappeared into the River Ouse, the thing

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she was most looking forward to was cooking dinner.

Which is to say that for me, at this point in my life, the Woolf-as-artist legacy is complex. Since the 1960s Woolf has been the you-go girl for aspiring women writers ("A Room of One's Own" has long been a popular name for feminist bookstores). And yet, in a very unfeminist way, work did not positively build up her self-esteem or even make her life worth living. Woolf clearly felt the misery of writing as much as the joy—and for documenting that reality, too, we owe her.

I'm not suggesting that women shouldn't write, of course. It's just that work, along with wifehood, motherhood, and all the rest, should be a Barbie we occasionally take down off her glittering pedestal and smash. By the way, have you noticed how women writers (Woolf, several of the Bitches, yours truly)—when ostensibly speaking for and about independent working women—often end up talking almost exclusively about women writers ... that is, about themselves? As if the truest form of female expression, professionally speaking (if not in general), were a solitary self-consciousness put to page? One of the legacies of Woolf's "Room"—which by now hums as large and powerfully enigmatic as the *2001: A Space Odyssey* monolith—is, I think, that we women tend to regard the activity of our writing with a hushed-voice reverence I'm not sure it always deserves. How refreshing if we occasionally gestured at a sheaf of papers, cackled broadly, and said, "Look at what I wrote yesterday! Well, that was crap! Obviously I should have just ... sat down and folded the laundry!" Two thirds of the books on the shelves of any given Barnes & Noble end up in the wood chipper anyway. Is it really such a great loss to cut back on the writing for a few years and just ... get those kids into kindergarten? After all, not all prose is deathless; some of it is terminally ill.

And thus endeth my manifesto: "A Couch of One's Own."

(P.S. I don't mean to imply that male writers can't quit too, if family responsibilities call. I'm thinking of those who write vague, NPR-type essays involving childhood memories of going with

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president,
in his own
words*

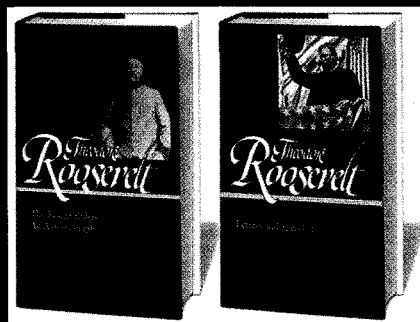
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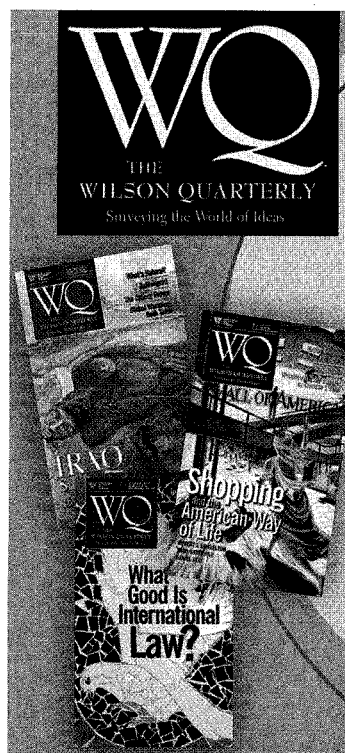


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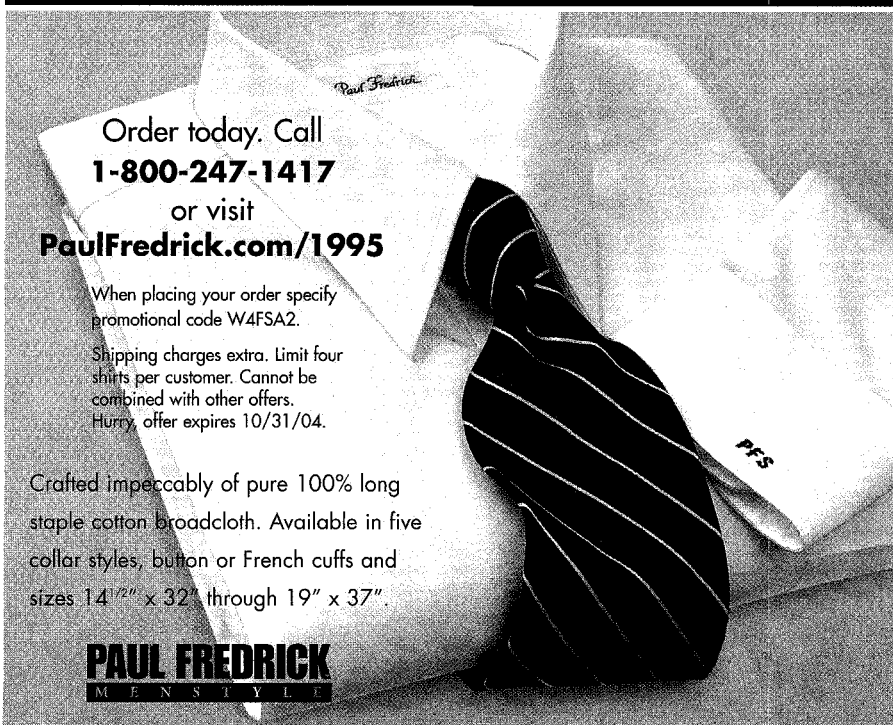
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MEN'S STYLE

one's mournful, alcoholic father to wordlessly watch unwinnable baseball games played out by the dad's favorite losing team. I say any man uses the Cubs ever again as a metaphor for futility and it's straight to diaper-genie duty with him.)

In this already too frantic era, particularly for creatively inclined women trying to run on twelve different treadmills at once, it is perhaps best not to try to live up to the modernist (in more ways than one) Woolf but, rather, to slow down to the pace of Ellen Gilchrist. (Idea for a new women's button: Instead of "You GO, Girl!," "You STOP, Girl!") In her soothing "The Middle Way," near the end of *Bitch*, Gilchrist sounds a rare note of tranquillity. Bearing an unimpeachable mixture of age, achievement, and contentment, she writes, with endearing deprecation,

One of the reasons I am happy now is that I did the work I had always dreamed of doing. But I didn't start doing it seriously and professionally until I was forty years old. I have always loved books and always thought of myself as a writer but didn't have an overwhelming desire to write and publish things until my children were almost grown. I had published things off and on during my life and I enjoyed the process but I had no sustained desire to be a writer. It was just something I knew I could do if I wanted to. I was busy falling in love and getting married to three different men (I married the father of my children twice), and having babies and buying clothes and getting my hair fixed and running in the park and playing tennis. During those years my desire for literature was satisfied by reading. If there was something that needed writing, like the minutes for a PTA meeting or a play for my husband's law firm's dinner party, I wrote it and everyone liked it but I didn't want to keep on writing. To tell the truth, I was forty years old before I had enough experience to be a writer. I barely knew what I thought, much less what anything meant.

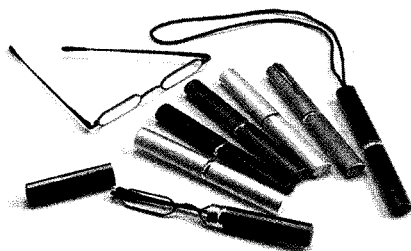
In contrast, in the same section, is Vivian Gornick's extraordinary "What Independence Has Come to Mean to Me." After decades of fighting on the front lines of feminism Gornick at sixty-five stands holding a coffee cup and staring out the window at the same

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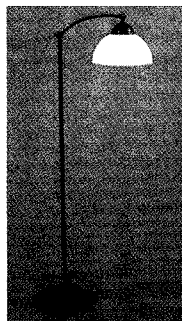


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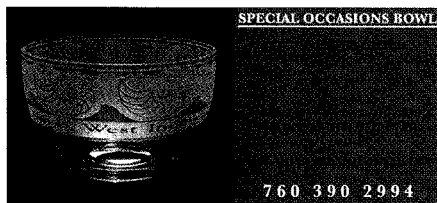


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New York street she has lived on for
twenty-five years ... alone. In ponder-
ing this solitude she startlingly writes,

The reality was that I was alone not
because of my politics but because I
did not know how to live in a decent
way with another human being. In
the name of equality I tormented
every man who'd ever loved me until
he left me: I called them on every-
thing, never let anything go, held
them up to accountability in ways
that wearied us both. There was, of
course, more than a grain of truth in
everything I said, but those grains,
no matter how numerous, need
not have become the sandpile that
crushed the life out of love.

"Love": the demon word, the lie, the
myth, the enslaver, promising so much
and delivering so little. "Just *once* I'd
like to walk into the house and dinner is
made!" railed a fortysomething friend
of mine recently. She and her husband,
child-free, both get home at seven. The
deus ex machina that saves her from
being a Bitch at such moments comes
in the form of a small Thai man who
delivers takeout. For two-career par-
ents the solution is more complicated.
In "The Myth of Co-Parenting," Hope
Edelman writes that when her suppos-
edly co-parenting husband suggested
they hire a nanny, she shouted, "I don't
need a nanny, I need a husband!"

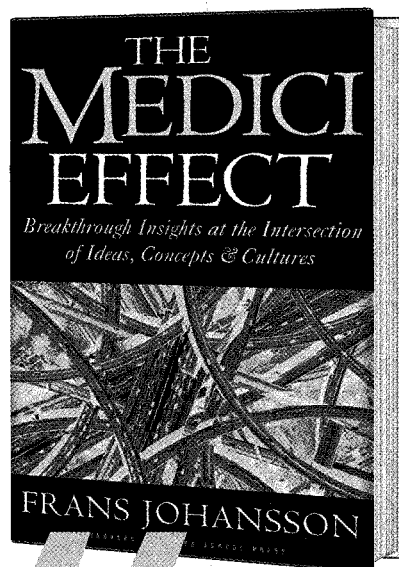
The point being that as the forces
of free enterprise drive up both men's
and women's work hours, leaving no
one at home, gone is the invisible hand
that used to gas up the car, pair the
socks, restock the fridge. Domestic help
can be hired, but something deeper
than the service this represents has
been lost: the magical sensation of being
cared for, of feeling comfort at the
hearth and in the family, of having
one's quotidian life—yes, are you ready?
—touched by an angel. Because any way
you slice it, there is a hole where
Mother used to be. Under the rage lies
sadness. But of course, those Bastards
argue, it doesn't have to be this way.
Instead of the now worrisomely capital-
istic Having It All, we can Make Do With
Less. That way one partner can stay
home (perhaps in a sign of the times,
the only writer of the fifty-three who
describes currently living as a full-time

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nurturer is a man: Rob Jackson, in "My Life as a Housewife"). Alternatively, as Rob Spillman suggests in "Ward and June R Us" (you've got to love those optimistic, solution-oriented men), why not trade off who plays Ward and who plays June week by week? This eliminates snarling over territorial control (and for me, happily, would mean knife points down in the dishwasher all week long) and ensures that by day's end someone's going to have dinner on the table.

The fact is, someone has to be June Cleaver some of the time. Otherwise we've got an unloved nation of Wards. And for what? As Kevin Canty writes, in "The Dog in Me,"

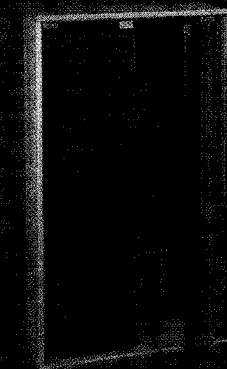
We have been approaching this idea of who does what and where we all fit in terms of ideology and emotion, in terms of feminism and equality and injury and lovingness. I wonder, though, if it would not be better approached in terms of political economy. What I'm getting at is, how did we get priced out of the market for our own lives? ... Many of us had cars and trips and nice clothes and spending money in high school and college. Not only do we want the same things for our children, but the prospect of living worse in midlife than we did in high school seems completely strange and unacceptable. Maybe it's as simple as that: maybe it's not our lives we can't afford but our aspirations, the things we were brought up to believe we could get from life.

Of course, trying to reach consensual consensus on where "lives" let off and mere "aspirations" begin will make determining the fifty-fifty chore split seem as easy as saying an insincere "Yes, dear" before hitting the couch for a little CNN. And yet if all this marital disagreement and deceit seems to make for an unbelievably poor existence, consider as an alternative Vivian Gornick's cautionary vision of total independence: a pristine pile of sandy regret, on which she sits alone. Perhaps the final word should go to Woolf, whose biographical axiom was "There are some stories which have to be retold by each generation." 

Sandra Tsing Loh is a writer and a performer whose radio commentaries appear regularly on American Public Media's Marketplace. She can also be heard on KPCC-FM, in Pasadena, California.

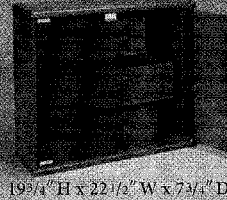
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BOOKS

No Way, Madame Bovary

A new but not improved translation

BY CLIVE JAMES

The first thing to say about *Madame Bovary* is that it's a terrific story. Other comparably great and famous novels aren't, but it is. Everyone should read it. Everyone *would* read it, given a free taste. The plot fairly belts along from the first page. Young Charles Bovary clumps into school to be laughed at by the other kids for his awkwardness. In no time he is a medical student, and then a doctor. The beautiful Emma Rouault is his second wife. He wins the right to her hand after setting her father's broken leg. It's a simple job but it gets him a reputation for competence. Fatally, he believes this too. Stuck with him in the depths of nowhere, Emma gradually realizes that she has married a chump. Longing for excitement and a classier way of life, she falls for a charming poseur called Leon. Their incipient affair is a standoff. But with an upmarket louse called Rodolphe she finds sexual fulfillment and plans a future. Sharing no such plans, Rodolphe dumps her. She collapses. Nursed back to health by the unsuspecting Charles, she hooks up again with Leon. This time it really happens. But the extravagance of her double life, financed by money stolen from Charles, gets her into ruinous debt. The loan shark closes in, Leon backs out, and Emma has only one way to go. On a shelf in the pharmacist's shop nearby is a bottle of ... but I won't say how it comes out, because some of you might not yet have read the book.

Some purists would say you can't. They would say that Flaubert's prose style is the essence of his art, and too near perfection to survive being translated. But we have to ask ourselves what we mean by the word "style." Undoubtedly there is a rhythm and a cadence to Flaubert's prose that only a fluent reader



of French can appreciate, although the fluent reader of French had better *be* French. We are always better judges of tone in our first language than in a second or third. To turn things around for a moment, late-nineteenth-century French critics were under the impression that Edgar Allan Poe was not only a spellbinding tale-teller but also a great master of English prose; and in the twentieth century it was widely assumed in the French literary world that the leading stylist of the English literary world was Charles Morgan, a dim bulb now long extinguished. If we are learning a foreign language, we tend to admire writers in it who are easy to read. One of the early bonuses attached to learning Russian, for example, is that all the standard European fairy tales were rewritten from the ground up by great writers. So within a few weeks you are

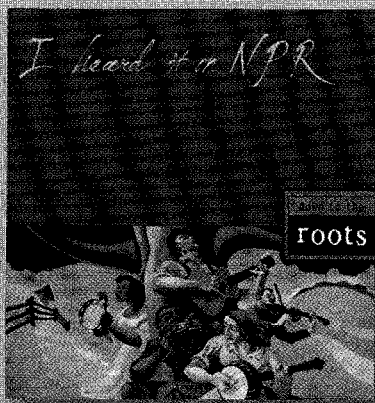
reading Tolstoy, whose name is on the title page of *The Three Bears*. It isn't all that long a step to reading *Anna Karenina*, because Tolstoy's sentences are never very tricky, however high the level of exposition. The temptation is to call Tolstoy a stylist. But in Russian, Turgenev was the stylist. Turgenev was the one who cared about repeating a word too soon. Tolstoy hardly cared at all.

It can safely be assumed that Flaubert's prose makes music. More important, however, is that it would be impressive even if it didn't. This is where the second, and richer, meaning of the word "style" comes in. You need only rudimentary French to spot that Flaubert never wastes a word. Every word is to the point, especially in the descriptive passages. In his landscapes trees are sometimes just trees and leaves leaves; but when it matters, he can give everything a specific name.

MADAME BOVARY

by Gustav Flaubert,
translated by
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Within four walls he gives every object a pinpoint particularity. If he is looking at things through Emma's eyes, he adds his analytical power to her naive hunger. Emma's wishes may have been blurred by her addiction to sentimental novels, but her creator, never sentimental for a second, keeps her perceptions sharp. Early in the story there is a ball at a grand house—an episode that awakes in Emma a dangerous taste for the high life. In a few paragraphs, using Emma's vision as a camera, Flaubert captures the sumptuous glamour with a photographic scope that makes us think of those lavish get-togethers in *War and Peace*, in Proust, or in *The Leopard*. Dickens could lay out a scene like that too, but he would spend thousands of words on it.

Minting his every phrase afresh, Flaubert avoided clichés like poison. "Avoid like poison" is a cliché, and one that Flaubert would either not have used if he had been composing in English or have flagged with italics to show that he knew it came ready-made. Martin Amis's *War Against Cliché* is nothing beside that of Flaubert, who waged his with nuclear weapons. (He died waging it: his last book, *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, was about no other subject.) Any translator must be unusually alert to what is alive or dead about his own use of language or else he will do an injury to Flaubert's style far more serious than merely failing to reproduce its pulse and lilt. When Flaubert seems to be saying that Charles's off-putting first wife is long in the tooth, the translator had better be careful about calling her long in the tooth, which in English means "old": Flaubert is just saying that her teeth are long. Unfortunately, evidence continues to accumulate that we are now past the time when more than a few jobbing writers knew how to keep an eye on their own prose. In the second-to-last stage of our language's decay it was enough to write correctly in order to gain a reputation for writing well. Now we are in the last stage, when almost nobody knows what it means to write correctly. Among ordinary pens for hire it is no longer common to write without solecisms; even those who can are likely to bolt phrases together with no real attention to their derivation; and in too many cases the

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language is utterly emptied of the history that brought it into being. This is a very depleted gene pool in which to go fishing for a translator of any foreign writer at all, let alone Flaubert. One can only salute the boldness of a publishing house still willing to give it a try. It might be wise, however, not to let the salute progress far above the shoulder until we have made sure that what we are acknowledging is a real contribution.

It may only look like one. Perhaps to mark the fact that one of the supreme achievements of French literature is being once again done into English, Oxford's physically handsome new translation of *Madame Bovary*, by Margaret Mauldon, bears on its cover James Tisso's *Young Woman in a Boat*, dating from 1870. Tisso, after quitting France the next year, spent the rest of his life being claimed by the English as one of their painters, so the invocation of his name can be counted as a nice cross-Channel touch. But *Madame Bovary* was first published in 1857. Considering that women's fashions scarcely stayed frozen in those thirteen years, a pedant might wish that a French painter of a slightly earlier period could have been called in; but the young lady certainly has a sensual mouth, which can be said to fit. Already, though, it is hard to suppress a suspicion that in the matter of historical fidelity things are out of kilter, and the suspicion intensifies once the book is opened. Professor Malcolm Bowie, who wrote the informative introduction, makes much ado in his back-of-the-jacket blurb about Flaubert's precision, which the professor assures us is matched by Mauldon's brand-new and meticulously accurate translation of the actual work. Any reader wishing to believe this is advised to start on page one. He had better not open the book accidentally at page 178, on which we find Emma's lover Rodolphe justifying to himself his decision to ditch her. Rodolphe is supposed to be a creep, but surely he never spoke the French equivalent of late-twentieth-century American slang: "And anyway there's all those problems, all that expense, as well. Oh, no! No way! It would have been too stupid."

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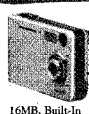
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Just to be certain that Rodolphe never spoke like a Hollywood agent, we can take a look at the same line in the original: *"Et, d'ailleurs, les embarras, la dépense ... Ah! non, non, mille fois non! Cela eût été trop bête!"* The perfectly ordinary, time-tested English idiom "No, no, a thousand times no!" would have fitted exactly. The awful possibility arises that Mauldon has never paid much attention to English idioms like that. Instead she thinks "No way!" is perfectly ordinary. We can take it for granted that she knows the French language of Flaubert's era inside out. (She has already translated, for the same series of Oxford World's Classics, works by Zola, Stendhal, Huysmans, Constant, and Maupassant.) But she has a crucially weaker knowledge of how the English language of her own era has been corrupted. You might say that English has always advanced through corruption, but "No way!" is an idiom so closely tied to the present that it can hardly fail to weaken any attempt to summon up the past. In Alan Russell's translation of *Madame Bovary*, first published by Penguin in 1950, there is no "No way!" Probably the phrase did not yet exist, but almost certainly Russell would not have used it even if it had. What he wrote was "No, no, by Heaven no!" Not quite as good as "a thousand times no!" perhaps, but certainly better than "No way!": better because more neutral, in the sense of being less tied to the present time.

This is not to say that such glaring anachronisms are frequent in Mauldon's translation. On page 23, when Charles Bovary is seeking Emma Rouault's hand, Emma's father thinks of him as "a bit of a loser," where Russell has "rather a wisp of a man"—which, as well as being less of a jazzy putdown from the late twentieth century, happens to be more accurate: a *gringalet*, according to my French-English dictionary, is a "little undersized fellow." But apart from a few moments like that, Mauldon is safe from being accused of outright barbarism. What she isn't safe from is the question of whether her translation is really an improvement on Russell's. Why try to improve on it if all she can offer is a prose that sounds—purport-

edly sounds—less dated? Isn't a dated prose style what we want? Admittedly, Russell translated "*nègre*" as "nigger." If only for justice, that one word was demanding to be changed, and Mauldon changes it, to "black man." But I can't find even one other word in Russell's translation that sounds dated in the wrong way. All the rest of it sounds dated in the right way—that is, closer to Flaubert in time. It must also be said, alas, that most of it is closer to Flaubert in possessing a sense of style. Mauldon might say that accuracy precluded an easy stylistic flow, but if she said that, she would have to prove herself accurate. Despite the heavy endorsement from Professor Bowie, her accuracy is not always beyond cavil.

The caviling starts early in Part One, Chapter One, where we get this sentence about Charles's parents: "His wife had been wild about him at first; she had treated him with an amorous servility that had turned him against her all the more." According to Flaubert, "*elle l'avait aimé avec mille servilités qui l'avaient détaché d'elle encore davantage.*" Where did the "thousand" go? Russell has the wife "lavishing on him a thousand servilities." You could say that the word "lavishing" is put in—but what Mauldon has left out might matter: the wife did a lot of specific things, not just one. And as so often happens with translators, a deadly knack of weakening points by being untrue to the text is accompanied by an even deadlier knack of missing them altogether by being true to it. Later in the opening chapter (during which Charles grows to manhood in only a few pages of hurtling compression) there is a quick summary of his dissipations at medical school, culminating in a clause in which he "learned how to make punch, and, at long last, discovered love." Thus Mauldon—and indeed, all Flaubert says is that he "*sut faire du punch et connut enfin l'amour.*" But Flaubert doesn't mean just discovering love, he means learning to make love. Flaubert is talking about sex. Russell does better by juicing the text: young Charles "took lessons in making punch, and finally in making love." So the older translation is franker, and thus truer to a novel whose frank-

READING LIST

ROTE FROM UNDERGROUND

Progressive books that—like Michael Moore—(ought to) make progressives wince

BY MARC COOPER

The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them, by Amy Goodman, with David Goodman (2004). Pacifica Radio's high priestess of political correctness (and her brother) cash in on her cult status with a cut-and-paste jeremiad. The enemy? Corporate media. Published by those revolutionaries at Disney.

We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party, by Mumia Abu-Jamal (2004). Another death-row apologia from the convicted cop killer and self-proclaimed political prisoner, philosopher, and poet. If Mumia cut his dreadlocks and changed his name back to Wesley Cook, would they still swoon over him at Bennington and Bard?

The Republican Noise Machine: Right-Wing Media and How It Corrupts Democracy, by David Brock (2004). As a pay-to-play conservative attack dog, Brock pretended to be a journalist. Now, as a subsidized liberal, he pretends to be a pundit.



Bushwomen: Tales of a Cynical Species, by Laura Flanders (2004). Revealed: Republican heroines, from Condi Rice to Laura Bush, are not really feminists! Shocking, just shocking.

Bonus title:

My Life, by Bill Clinton (2004). One crucial apology omitted from the Great Triangulator's 900-page oil slick: "If I had resigned when I got caught with my pants down, George W. Bush would never have been President."

Marc Cooper is a contributing editor to *The Nation* and a columnist for *LA Weekly*. His books include *Pinochet and Me: A Chilean Anti-Memoir* (2001) and *The Last Honest Place in America: Paradise and Perdition in the New Las Vegas* (2004).

ness about these things, in the great gallery of nineteenth-century novels, puts Flaubert beside Tolstoy, and ahead of both Dickens and Henry James.

In Part One, Chapter Three, Flaubert pulls off a fatefully resonant effect when Emma drains her glass of curaçao while Charles watches. Flaubert's micro-metrically particular style is watching her as well: "*le bout de sa langue ... léchait à petits coups le fond du verre.*" Mauldon's version ("the tip of her tongue ... delicately licked at the bottom of the glass") misses the repetitive movement. Russell missed it too, but he may have deliberately dodged it, having spotted the pornographic element in those multiple dartings. They are a forecast of that astonishing single-paragraph set piece in Part Two, Chapter Nine, when we can tell what Rodolphe has just done to Emma because the whole landscape has

an orgasm. Ever the keen student, Mauldon is well aware that with Flaubert, the man who invented the *style indirect libre* (although he himself never used the term), any description of anything can relate to the interior lives of the characters in the scene. She is aware of it, but all too often she doesn't spot the way it works.

Even with the direct style, in which emotions are stated up front, she can miss a lot, especially when it depends on an apparently minor point of grammar and syntax. There is a telling example at the end of Part One, Chapter Five, when Charles, after a night in bed with his beautiful wife, goes riding off to work, "his heart full of the night's bliss." Once again Mauldon might have done better to observe the difference between the singular and the plural. Flaubert has Charles's heart "*plein des*

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félicités de la nuit." Emma has more to offer than an abstract noun. Sensibly and more sensitively, Russell goes with the numbers: "the joys of the night." Like the thousand servilities, the joys of the night are separable events. She did this, she did that; her husband remembers as he rides.

In Part One, Chapter Seven, Emma finally admits to herself that her marriage is boring her to metaphorical death. "*Pourquoi, mon Dieu, me suis-je mariée?*" Russell, perhaps redundantly but at least faithfully, doubles the invocation of the deity into "O God, O God." Inexplicably, Mauldon switches it to the mundane: "Why in the world did I ever get married?" This seemingly tiny emendation counts as a heavy loss when one considers Emma's habitually blasphemous relation to the Church. In her downhill phase she will use the house of God as a trysting place for adultery. If we count as a poem any length of writing that can't be quoted from *except* out of context, then *Madame Bovary* is a poem. We might monkey with its language, but we mustn't monkey with its internal consistency.

Strangely enough, on the face of it, an amateur literary stylist is less likely to do that than a professional scholar. But really it is not so strange. From before World War I until well after World War II, in the long heyday of the gentleman translators, the leading practitioners were not always supported by a cheering squad from the academy, but they could write a confident prose of their own, however daunting the foreign model. Among them they had most of the big languages covered, and almost all of them were casually at home with French—which, in an era when Greek and Latin still dominated the syllabus, was more commonly acquired on vacation than in the schoolroom. C. K. Scott Moncrieff's Proust eventually needed upgrading as to accuracy, but Terence Kilmartin, who wrote an elegant prose himself when moonlighting from his job as literary editor of the *Observer*, was properly respectful of the standard Scott Moncrieff had set in matching Proust's flow; and in the final stages D. J. Enright,

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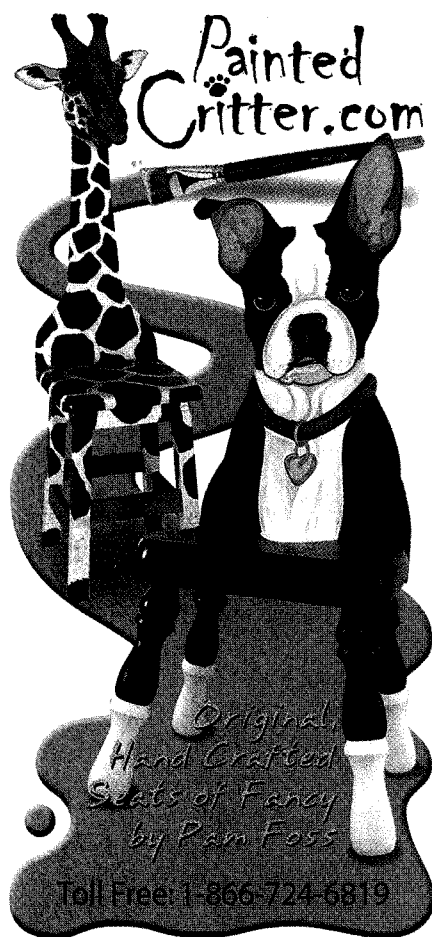
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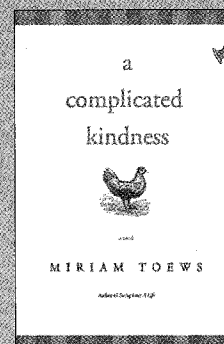
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another part-timer, was properly respectful of Kilmartin. There is not likely to be a further advance on the Proust that Kilmartin and Enright gave us, although there will probably be no shortage of boondoggles like the recent group effort by which various translators took on a section each, thus inadvertently proving that a single voice was the only thing holding the original together. "Either you got the voice," as the great soprano Zinka Milanov legendarily said, "or you don't got the voice."

The amateurs had voices of their own with which to pay respect to the foreign voices they loved. In the decade after World War II the well-connected bunch of translators who were grouped around Roger Senhouse, a Francophile who raised dilettantism to the level of a profession, did a collective job of translating Colette that will brook no superseding, mainly because the job was composed of individual spare-time efforts, each answering to a passion. Even more wonderful than her books about Cheri, Colette's masterpiece, *Julie de Carneilhan*, will never need translating again; the job was done for keeps by the prodigiously gifted Patrick Leigh Fermor while he was cooling down from his wartime adventures. In the same fruitful few years of recovery from the physical battle against barbarism, the petite nineteenth-century French novels that buttressed the achievement of *Madame Bovary* and sometimes even preceded it—Constant's *Adolphe*, Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*, Daudet's *Sappho*—were translated by people who saw fidelity to them as a delightful but temporary duty, not as part of a long slog to corner a market. Most of those translations showed up in the prettily handy postwar series from Hamish Hamilton called the Novel Library. Now long defunct as a commercial proposition, the series is catnip for collectors in secondhand bookshops all over the planet. One of the Novel Library's particular jewels was the 1948 translation of *Madame Bovary* by Gerard Hopkins, who had the elementary tact to render "mille fois non" as "a thousand times no." (I could as easily have used his renderings as Russell's in the task of

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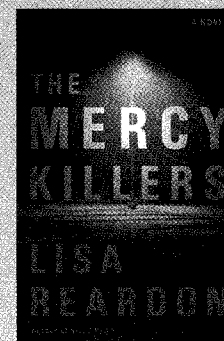
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measuring Mauldon's, but the Penguin translation is the one most of us in the old British Empire grew up with, just as most Americans grew up with Francis Steegmuller's translation.)

The impulse behind the great wave of amateur translations—and this was especially true in the immediate aftermath of World War II—was a generous desire to bring foreign cultural treasures within reach of ordinary people. It was the era when patricians, having seen civilization taken to the brink of ruin, still thought it might be preserved if enlightenment could be spread more equally. Book lovers who knew that their multilingual education was a privilege wanted to share it with people less lucky. The work was aimed directly at the public, not at the academy. Presumably Mauldon is looking to the public too, but her pages of notes at the end of this book are looking to Professor Bowie: they are proof of academic diligence. To put it bluntly, recent translations tend to be busywork, and earlier ones tend to be the real tributes, even when inaccurate by scholarly standards.

No doubt this new translation of *Madame Bovary* is a labor of love. But affection and affectation don't sit well together. In his introduction Professor Bowie quotes his protégé's translation of the paragraph about Rodolphe that contains the most famous thing Flaubert ever wrote about human language. According to Mauldon, Flaubert said it was "like a cracked kettledrum on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when what we long to do is make music that will move the stars to pity." Well, it certainly sounds precise. But it isn't, quite. In his introduction to the first, 1950 edition Alan Russell revealed that he thought *Les liaisons dangereuses* was a seventeenth-century novel—wrong by a hundred years. (He quietly corrected the blunder for later editions, but it remains a pretty noisy blunder to have made.) But he knew that a *chaudron* isn't a kettledrum. Back in Sydney, in the First Kogarah Company of the Boys' Brigade, I played the kettledrum often enough to know that its barrel can be pretty seriously cracked and it still won't yield a dud note. It does that when its skin is split.

If Flaubert had meant a kettledrum, he would have said so. What he meant was a kettle. Russell rendered the word that way, and so did Gerard Hopkins.

So much for accuracy as a fetish: it is bound to lead one into trouble when one strays into the territory of stuff that won't stay still to be researched. And in that territory lie the things of the mind. As his learned admirers, from Francis Steegmuller to Julian Barnes, have had so much constructive fun telling us, Flaubert would go to any lengths in the quest for factual precision. But Flaubert was a creative genius: he was putting his research to work in aid of psychological perceptions that were uniquely his. One of those perceptions was that he himself was *Madame Bovary*. No wonder he loved her. Loving her, he gave her novel everything he had. Henry James thought that *Madame Bovary* was as good as Flaubert ever got. James was wrong to believe that the book was a tract against immorality. If it was, then its author notably failed to heed the lesson. But James might have been right to believe that everything Flaubert subsequently wrote added up to a decline. Even Proust thought that *le mot juste* made a fetish out of what should be taken for granted. The Monty Python crew translated *Wuthering Heights* into semaphore, and incidentally proposed that in a novel, story comes before language. So it does, even when the language is a miracle.

As a story, *Madame Bovary* is fit for worship, but it should be worshipped critically, as man-made and not a sacred text. At one point Emma confides her sexual frustration to her maid, Felicité. But nothing comes of it. Flaubert might have had the idea that Felicité would be part of the action as Emma's confidante. If so, he forgot about it, and then forgot to take that bit out. It was a big uncertainty to leave in. There is no uncertainty about the style, but there again, the wrong kind of worship leads to myopia. Blinded by the dazzle, Mauldon just doesn't seem to see the absurdity of leaving some of the French as French. Various periodicals are read by the characters in the novel. Mauldon leaves their titles untranslated. So did Hopkins, but Russell was daring enough

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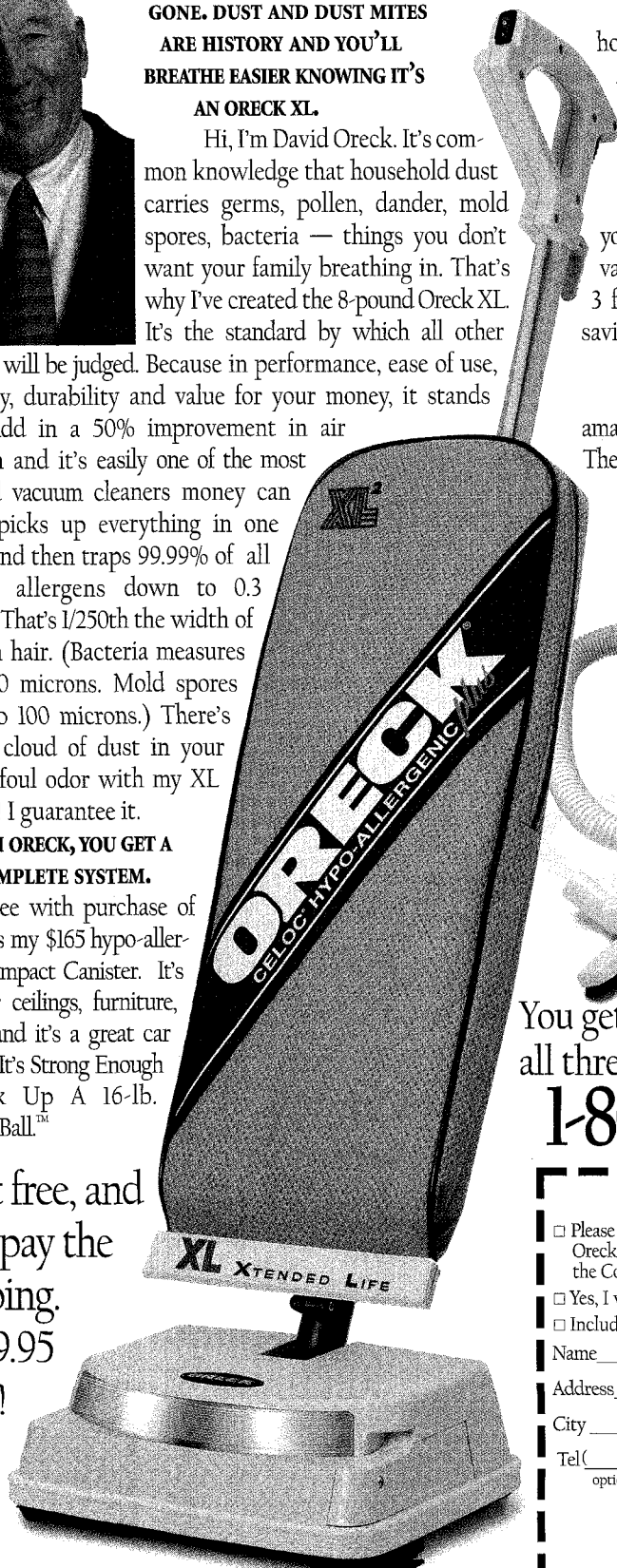
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to give rough English equivalents. The tacit claim behind leaving French words as they are is that your sense of accuracy is so highly developed that if you can't find an exact equivalent, the word should be left inviolate. But in that case, why translate the thing at all?

The question is all too well worth asking, alas. Judging from its introduction and appended apparatus, this translation is looking for a home on the kind of university syllabus in which students are encouraged to believe that they can absorb foreign literatures without ever bothering themselves with the languages in which they were written. In that regard America's economic dominance of the earth has made the English language imperialistic beyond the dreams of the people who invented it. No doubt it had to happen. Most of the amateur translators were already primed with at least one of the two ancient languages when they arrived at university, after which they acquired three or four of the modern languages as easily as if dipping themselves in paint. Those times won't be coming back. Nor will the once universal assumption among the literate that their time at university was merely the beginning of an education that would last for the rest of their lives.

But surely some of the effort put into the illusory omniscience of today's comfortably monoglot students could be put into teaching them at least one foreign language as a compulsory subject; and surely, in that case, French should be the first on the list. One doesn't ask for perfection. Anyone, even starting late, can learn enough French to know that Flaubert didn't actually sound like any of his translators, no matter how accurate. Using Proust as my handbook, I spent fifteen years learning to read French, and I still don't read it much less haltingly than I speak it. But I can read enough of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* to know that a translator who can't carry the reader with her own style will put that marvelous book further away, even while she strains every nerve to bring it close. ■

Clive James is a London-based literary journalist, novelist, critic, and poet. His collected poems, The Book of My Enemy, and a selection of his critical prose, As of This Writing, were both published last year.

NEW FICTION

The Real Thing

BY JOSEPH O'NEILL

It takes only a few pages of William Trevor's latest collection of stories before we find ourselves on the devastated circuit of teapot, toast, and flickering turf that Trevor has for decades mapped as his own. This is a damp, socially stagnant world in which saucepans and chairs and domestic heat are inordinately treasured, and jars of jelly babies and the Big Houses of provincial Ireland still cast a spell; a world in which old-economy protagonists—a librarian, a priest, a uniformed waiter, a fisherman, a horse trainer, a scullery maid, a maker of religious statues—will frequent a café with a 7-Up sign rather than a coffee bar, and will contrive to eat tinned peaches, liver and peas, and chicken-and-ham paste. In most writers such anachronisms would be intolerable. In Trevor's work they are, somehow, not.



A BIT ON THE SIDE
by William Trevor
Viking

Part of the explanation is cultural luck. Trevor is (as Elizabeth Bowen and Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain were) the beneficiary of Joyce and Yeats, who authorized readers around the world to take an interest in the daily routines of Ireland's shabby middle classes and tragically glamorous Protestant Ascendancy. Moreover, Trevor, from a Protestant family in a small town in County Cork, is of a generation that grew old in a war-torn, agricultural, religiously constrictive, and economically backward Ireland that quaintly specialized in dashing the hopes of its population. It was terrific dramatic material. In contrast, younger Irish writers (that is, anyone younger than the excellent John McGahern) are saddled with describing the nuances of peace, economic growth, and small-time cosmopolitanism—one reason, perhaps, why the latest novels

by Colm Toibin and Colum McCann are bio-fictions about Henry James and Rudolf Nureyev.

The other part of the explanation is that the more William Trevor practices, the luckier he gets. This is his tenth collection of new stories, and his famous economy and fluidity are as much in evidence as ever. Trevor describes interior states as concretely as he conjures his sparse domestic interiors: here's a chair, and there, in the kitchen, is a broken heart. The governing artistic virtue, at all times, is truthfulness. There is nothing bogus or histrionic here. No matter who takes the narrative point of view—the horse trainer's embittered widow, a schoolboy toying with a jackdaw, a man breaking up with his mistress, the priest (very movingly), desperate for the spiritual companionship of a developmentally arrested young woman—every situation that Trevor makes thuds solidly of the real thing. He stands by the old-fashioned epistemological notion that imaginative empathy is a dependable and sufficient instrument of knowledge. Not unrelated is that he distrusts the suggestive, dangerously ungovernable effects of heightened language, perhaps to a fault: he is not above such phrases as "sallow complexion" and "considerable bulk."

Ultimately, what is formally interesting about these fictions is the relationship they predicate between reader and text. Earlier this year the novelist Michael Chabon confessed in *The New York Times Book Review* to the vice of quickly tossing books aside. "Your beginning better be just killer," he warned. William Trevor is refreshingly free of anxiety on this score. He makes no attempt to arrest or flatter or reassure the reader—there are no one-liners, no improbably witty characters, no far-out shenanigans, no patent-leather prose. He expects our attention and, most of all, respects it. Which is why, outmoded though they may seem, these stories are the opposite of dated. ■

Joseph O'Neill is the author of two novels, *This Is the Life* (1991) and *The Breezes* (1995), and the non-fiction work *Blood-Dark Track: A Family History* (2001).

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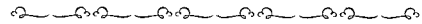
The experiments, while not completely successful, did produce a rudimentary *viscoelastic* cushioning with an uncanny ability to *mold itself*—automatically—to the human form; potentially, the best mattress material the world had ever seen.

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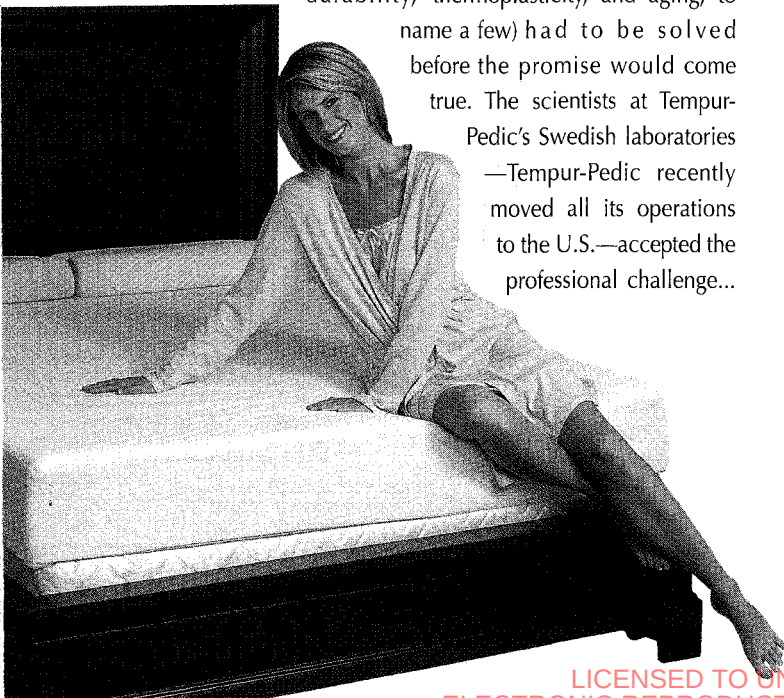
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BOOKS

Mind the Gap

Turkey is everyone's idea of a "successful" modern Muslim state. A new novel will make you think twice

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Well before the fall of 2001 a search was in progress, on the part of Western readers and critics, for a novelist in the Muslim world who could act the part of dragoman, an interpretive guide to the East. In part this was and remains a quest for reassurance. The hope was (and is) that an apparently "answering" voice, attuned to irony and rationality and to the quotidian rather than the supernatural, would pick up the signals sent by self-critical Americans and Europeans and remit them in an intelligible form. Hence the popularity of the Egyptian Naguib Mahfouz, who seemed in his Cairo café-society mode to be potentially "one of us"—even more so when he had the misfortune to be stabbed in the neck by a demented fundamentalist. There was a much lesser vogue for spikier secular writers, such as the late Abdelrahman Munif, author of the *Cities of Salt* quintet, and the late Israeli Arab Emil Habibi, whose novel *Saeed the Pessoptimist* is the favorite narrative of many Palestinians (and who also had the grace to win Israel's national prize for the best writing in Hebrew). In some ways those two were not quite "Muslim" enough for the purposes of authenticity.

Orhan Pamuk, a thoughtful native of Istanbul who lived for three years in New York, has for some time been in contention for the post of mutual or reciprocal fictional interpreter. Turkey is, physically and historically, the "bridge" between East and West, and I have yet to read a Western newspaper report from the country that fails to employ that cheering metaphor. (I cannot be certain how many "Eastern" articles and broadcasts are similarly affirmative.) With his previous novel, *My Name Is Red*, Pamuk himself became a kind of register of this position, dwelling on the interpenetration of Islamic and Western styles

and doing so in a "postmodern" fashion that laid due emphasis on texts, figures, and representations. After 9/11 he was the natural choice for *The New York Review of Books*, to which he contributed a decent if unoriginal essay that expressed horror at the atrocities while admonishing Westerners not to overlook the wretched of the earth. In Turkey he spoke up for Kurdish rights and once refused a state literary award. Some of his fellow secularists, however, felt that he was too ready to "balance" his views with criticism of the Kemalist and military forces that act as guarantors of Turkey's secularism.

SNOW
by Orhan Pamuk
Knopf

but from—yes—the "bridge that unites them." The important thing, as the President went on to intone from Pamuk, "is not the clash of parties, civilizations, cultures, East and West." No; what is important is to recognize "that other peoples in other continents and civilizations" are "exactly like you." *De te fabula narratur.*

Human beings are of course essentially the same, if not exactly identical. But somehow this evolutionary fact does not prevent clashes of varying intensity from being the norm rather than the exception. "Remember your humanity, and forget the rest," Albert Einstein is supposed to have said. This already questionable call to amnesia translates badly in cultures that regard Einstein himself as a Satanic imp spawned from the hideous loins of Jewish degeneration.

In his new novel Pamuk gives us every reason to suppose that he is far more ambivalent about this facile "bridge-building" stuff than he has so far let on. The plot is complex yet



In a Bush speech to the new membership of NATO, delivered in Istanbul last June, one of the President's handlers was astute enough to insert a quotation from Pamuk, to the effect that the finest view of the city was not from its European or its Asian shores

susceptible of summary. Narrated by Pamuk, with the advantages of both foresight and hindsight, it shows an anomic young Turk named Kerim Alakusoglu, a poet with a bad case of literary sterility and sexual drought, as he negotiates a moment of personal

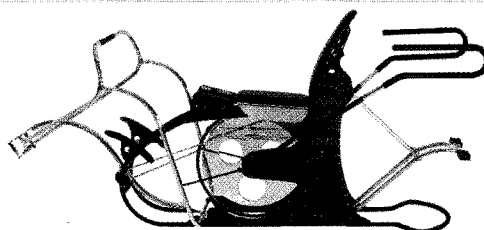
and political crisis in the city of Kars, on the Turkish-Armenian frontier. Disliking his given name, the man prefers to go under the acronym formed by his initials: "Ka." Having taken part in the violent and futile Marxist-Leninist student movement that was eventually obliterated by the military coup of 1980, and having followed so many of his ex-comrades into exile in Germany, Ka is a burned-out case. Pretending to seek a journalistic assignment in this remote town, which has recently witnessed an epidemic of suicide by young girls thwarted in their desire to take the Muslim veil, he is in fact magnetized by the possibility of seeing Ipek, the lost flame of his youth. As he arrives, a blizzard isolates the city and almost buries it in snow—for which the Turkish word is *kar*. One might therefore deploy a cliché and say that the action is frozen in time.

When frozen in the present, the mise-en-scène discloses a community of miserably underemployed people, caught among a ramshackle state machine, a nascent Islamism, and the claims of competing nationalist minorities. A troupe of quasi-Brechtian traveling players is in town, and it enacts a "play within a play," in which the bitter violence of the region is translated with shocking effect directly onto the stage. Drawn into the social and religious conflict, Ka seems to alternate between visions of "snow" in its macrocosmic form—the chilly and hostile masses—and its microcosmic: the individual beauty and uniqueness of each flake. Along the scrutinized axes that every flake manifests he rediscovers his vocation and inspiration as a poet and arranges a cycle of verses. This collection is lost when, on his return to Frankfurt, he is shot down in a street of the red-light district.

In terms of characterization the novel is disappointing, precisely because its figures lack the crystalline integrity of individuals. Ipek, for example, appears on almost every page yet is barely allowed any quality other than her allegedly wondrous beauty. The protagonists speak their lines as Islamists, secularists, conformists, and opportunists. And the author leaves no room for doubt that he finds the Islamists the most persuasive and courageous. This

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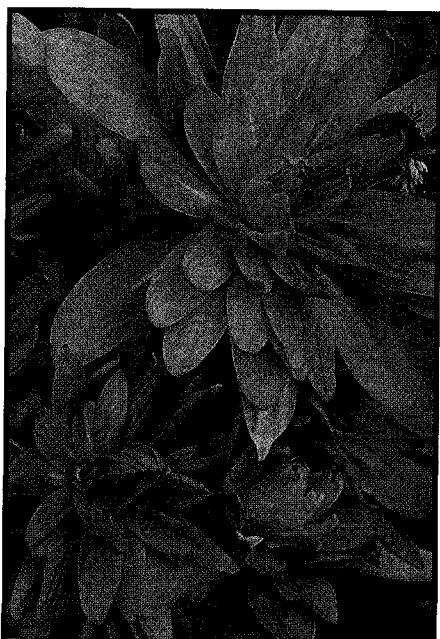
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is true in spite of the utter nonsense that he makes them spout. A couple of Muslim boys corner Ka and demand that he answer this question, about a dead girl he never met:

Now we'd like to know if you could do us both a favor. The thing is, we can both accept that Teslime might have been driven to the sin of suicide by the pressures from her parents and the state. It's very painful; Fazil can't stop thinking that the girl he loved committed the sin of suicide. But if Teslime was a secret atheist like the one in the story, if she was one of those *unlucky souls* who don't even know that they are atheists, or if she committed suicide because she was an atheist, for Fazil this is a catastrophe: It means he was in love with an atheist.

I should caution the potential reader that a great deal of the dialogue is as lengthy and stilted as that, even if in this instance the self-imposed predicaments of the pious, along with their awful self-pitying solipsism, are captured fairly well. So is the superiority/inferiority complex of many provincial Turks—almost masochistic when it comes to detailing their own woes, yet intensely resentful of any "outside" sympathy. Most faithfully rendered, however, is the pervading sense that secularism has been, or is being, rapidly nullified by diminishing returns. The acting troupe is run by a vain old Kemalist mountebank named Sunay Zaim, who once fancied himself an Atatürk look-alike, and his equally decrepit and posturing lady friend. The army and the police use torture as a matter of course to hang on to power. Their few civilian supporters are represented as diseased old ex-Stalinists whose leader—one Z. Demirkol, not further named—could have leapt from the pages of Soviet agitprop. These forces take advantage of the snowstorm to mount a coup in Kars and impose their own arbitrary will, though it is never explained why they do this or how they can hope to get away with it.

In contrast, the Muslim fanatics are generally presented in a favorable or lenient light. A shadowy "insurgent" leader, incongruously named "Blue," is a man of bravery and charm, who may or may not have played a heroic role

in the fighting in Chechnya and Bosnia. (Among these and many other contemporary references, the Taliban and al-Qaeda are never mentioned.) The girls who immolate themselves for the right to wear head-covering are shown as if they had been pushed by the pitiless state, or by their gruesome menfolk, to the limits of endurance. They are, in other words, veiled quasi-feminists. The militant boys of their age are tormented souls seeking the good life in the spiritual sense. The Islamist ranks have their share of fools and knaves, but these tend to be ex-leftists who have switched sides in an ingratiating manner. Ka himself is boiling with guilt, about the "European" character that he has acquired in exile in Frankfurt, and about the realization that the Istanbul bourgeoisie, from which he originates, generally welcomes military coups without asking too many questions. The posturing Sunay at least phrases this well.

No one who's even slightly westernized can breathe free in this country unless they have a secular army protecting them, and no one needs this protection more than intellectuals who think they're better than everyone else and look down on other people. If it weren't for the army, the fanatics would be turning their rusty knives on the lot of them and their painted women and chopping them all into little pieces. But what do these upstarts do in return? They cling to their little European ways and turn up their affected little noses at the very soldiers who guarantee their freedom.

A continuous theme of the novel, indeed, is the rancor felt by the local inhabitants against anyone who has bettered himself—let alone herself—by emigrating to an undifferentiated "Europe" or by aping European manners and attitudes. A secondary version of this bitterness, familiar to those who study small-town versus big-city attitudes the world over, is the suspicion of those left behind that they are somehow not good enough. But this mutates into the more consoling belief that they are despised by the urbane. Only one character—unnamed—has the nerve to point out that if free visas were distributed, every hypocrite in town would leave right away and Kars would be deserted.

As for the past tense in which Kars is also frozen, I have to rely on a certain amount of guesswork. Although Ka's acronym could ostensibly have been drawn from any pair of consonant/vowel first and last names, I presume from Pamuk's demonstrated interest in codes and texts that K and A were chosen deliberately. There seem to be two possibilities here: one is "Kemal Atatürk," the military founder of modern secular Turkey; the other is "Kurdistan and Armenia," standing in for the national subtexts of the tale.

Pamuk supplies no reason for his selection, but the setting of Kars means that he might intend elements of both of the above. The city was lost by Ottoman Turkey to Russia in 1878, regained in 1918, and then briefly lost again to an alliance of Bolsheviks and Armenians until, in late 1920, it became the scene of a Turkish nationalist victory that fixed the boundary between Turkey and then-Soviet Armenia that endures to the present day. (This event was among the many negotiations of Woodrow Wilson's postwar

diplomacy, which had "awarded" the region to the Armenians.) From Kars, also in 1920, the legendary Turkish Communist leader Mustafa Suphi set out along the frontier region, dotted with magically evocative place-names like Erzurum and Trebizond, and was murdered with twelve of his comrades by right-wing "Young Turks." This killing was immortalized by Nazim Hikmet in a poem that is still canonical in Turkey. (Hikmet himself, the nation's unofficial laureate, was to spend decades in jail and in exile because of his Communist loyalties.) The outright victor in all those discrepant struggles was Mustafa Kemal, who had helped defeat two "Christian" invasions of Turkish soil in his capacity as a soldier, and who went on to assume absolute political power and to supervise and direct the only lasting secular revolution that a Muslim society has ever undergone. His later change of name to Kemal Atatürk was only part of his driving will to "Westernize" Turkey, Latinize its script, abolish male and female religious headgear,

adopt surnames, and in general erase the Islamic caliphate that today's fundamentalists hope to restore.

Pamuk is at his best in depicting the layers of the past that are still on view in Kars—in particular the Armenian houses and churches and schools whose ghostly reminder of a scattered and desecrated civilization is enhanced in its eeriness by the veil of snow. Nor does he omit the sullen and disaffected Kurdish population. The price of Kemalism was the imposition of a uniform national identity on Turkey, where ethnic and religious variety was heavily repressed, and where the standard-issue unsmiling bust of Atatürk—pervasive in Pamuk's account of the scenery and most often described as the target of terrorism or vandalism—became the symbol of military rule. (Atatürk was a lifelong admirer of the French Revolution, but Turkey, as was once said of Prussia, is not so much a country that has an army as an army that has a country.) In these circumstances it takes a certain amount of courage for any Turk-

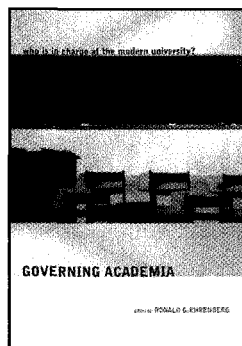


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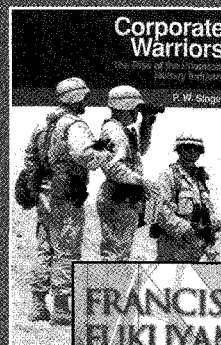
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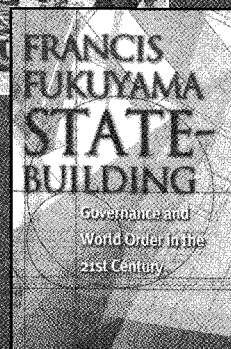
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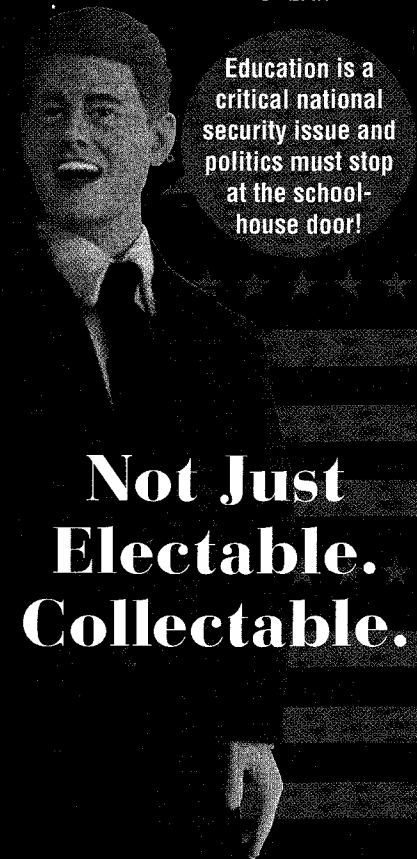
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ish citizen to challenge the authorized version of modern statehood.

However, courage is an element that this novel lacks. Some important Turkish scholarship has recently attempted an honest admission of the Armenian genocide and a critique of the official rationalizations for it. The principal author in this respect is Taner Akcam, who, as Pamuk is certainly aware, was initially forced to publish his findings as one of those despised leftist exiles in Germany—whereas from reading *Snow* one might easily conclude that all the Armenians of Anatolia had decided for some reason to pick up and depart en masse, leaving their ancestral properties for tourists to gawk at. As for the Kurds, Pamuk tends to represent them as rather primitive objects of sympathy.

Ka's poetic rebirth involves him, and us, in a comparable fatalism and passivity. Early in the story he is quite baldly described as feeling a predetermined poem coming on, and is prevented from completion of the closing lines only by a sudden knock at the door. I managed to assimilate the implied allusion to Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. But about fifty pages later, when another poem was successfully delivered from Ka's subconscious, I was confronted with a full-out deadpan account of the person from Porlock who had interrupted Coleridge at the critical moment. Pamuk's literalism and pedantry are probably his greatest enemies as a writer of fiction; he doesn't trust the reader until he has hit him over the head with dialogue and explanation of the most didactic kind. Throughout the remainder of the novel, though, we are invited to believe in the miraculous rather than the mundane: Ka quite simply sits himself down at odd moments and sets out near faultless poems (never quoted) on whatever paper is handy. The necessary cliché about "automatic writing" is eventually employed, somewhat heavily, to account for this. But I was inevitably put in mind of the Koran, or "recitation," by which the Prophet Muhammad came to be the supposed medium of the divine.

Ka is presented to us as a man who has assumed or affected his atheism as a kind of protective epidermis. His unbelief is of a piece with his attempt to

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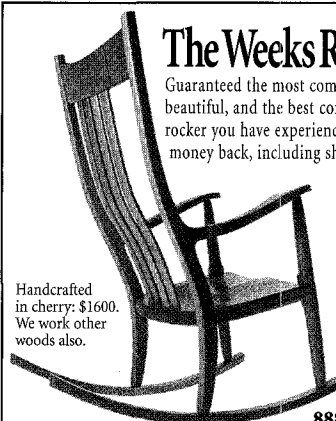
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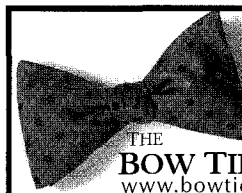
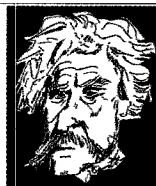
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It won't be found in the Bible. Critical examination of the New Testament Gospels reveals sloppy history, perhaps deliberately deceptive, giving a picture of Jesus more imaginative than factual. Most Christians seem not to notice or care---transcendentalism spins its own reality. But true realists, for whom historical accuracy matters, may be pleased with what the recently discovered *Gospel of Thomas* provides: 113 notes taken down by Thomas of perplexing things Jesus said. Such notes were probably made at the times they were heard and have not suffered alteration---the best kind of source for a history.

Jack Hannah in *You Will Not Taste Death: Jesus and Epicureanism* recognizes the notes as chronologically ordered and correlative with the skeletal history used in the *Gospel of Mark*. Hannah provides all the text of *Thomas* and all Marcan context, and upon this develops a narrative about Jesus that is tenably historical.

This *historical* Jesus based his teaching on the Epicurean philosophy; e.g. in place of Judaism's practices of fasting, praying, almsgiving, and obeying food laws, this *historical* Jesus said, "Tell no lie and do not do what you hate."

This *historical* Jesus never mentioned devil, demons, or hell. And the most radical influence of Epicureanism on Jesus' thought was that God and Caesar are man-made authorities and that one's ultimate authority should be oneself.

Hannah's book is 321 pgs., pbk., \$12 postpaid.

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deaden his emotions and decrease his vulnerability. His psyche is on a knife edge, and he is always ready to be overwhelmed by the last person he has spoken to. Yet he can watch an educator being shot in cold blood by a Muslim zealot and feel nothing. Only when in the company of beaming Dervishes and Sufis---those Islamic sects that survived Atatürk's dissolution of clerical power---does he become moist and trusting and openhearted. Yet "rising up inside him was that feeling he had always known as a child and as a young man at moments of extraordinary happiness: a prospect of future misery and hopelessness." Like the Danish prince who had a version of the same difficulty, Ka finds a form of cathartic relief in helping to produce the violent stage play that expresses his own fears and dreads. Pamuk drops in many loud references to Chekhov, and the gun that is on the mantelpiece from the beginning of the action is at last duly and lethally discharged. (It is described as a "Canakkale" rifle, Canakkale being the Turkish name for the Dardanelle Straits and the site of Gallipoli---the battle that was Atatürk's baptism as a leader.) The handgun that goes off later, and extinguishes Ka's life, is heard only offstage. But it is clear that Islamist revenge has followed him to the heart of Europe and punished him for his ambivalence.

Prolix and often clumsy as it is, Pamuk's new novel should be taken as a cultural warning. So weighty was the impression of Atatürk that ever since his death, in 1938, Western statecraft has been searching for an emulator or successor. Nasser was thought for a while to be the needful charismatic, secularizing strongman. So was Sadat. So, for a while, was the Shah of Iran. And so was Saddam Hussein ... Eager above all to have a modern yet "Muslim" state within the tent, the United States and the European Union have lately been taking Turkey's claims to modernity more and more at face value. The attentive reader of *Snow* will not be so swift to embrace this consoling conclusion. **A**

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a columnist for Vanity Fair.

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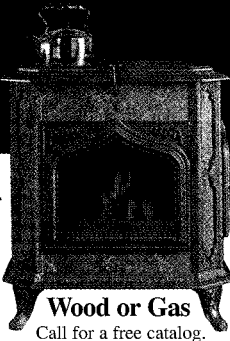
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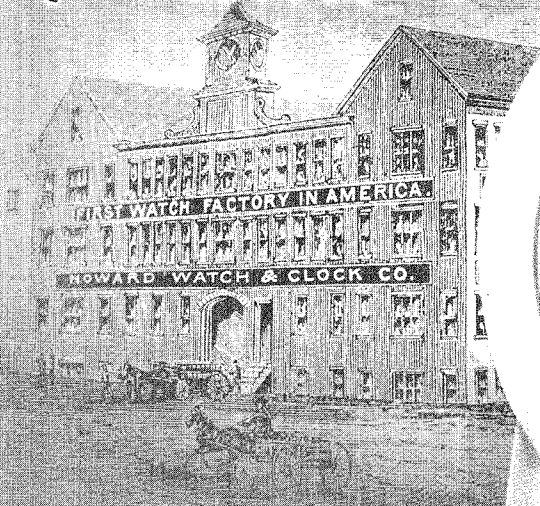
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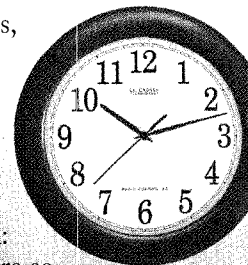
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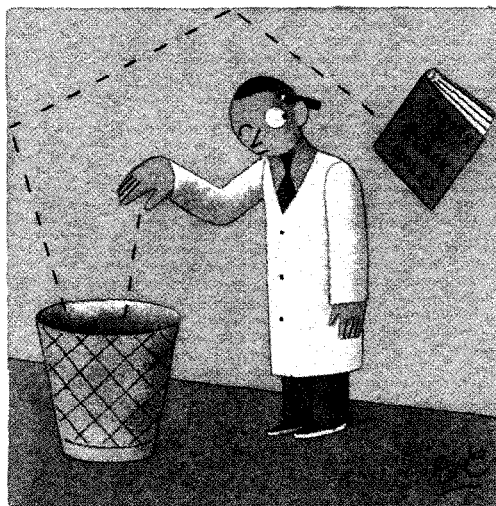
Old science doesn't die ...

BY CULLEN MURPHY

For nearly thirty years Cambridge University's Stephen W. Hawking has been the cosmologist most closely associated in the public mind with the phenomenon of black holes—cosmic concentrations of mass so dense that nothing can escape from them. The basic idea behind black holes has a long pedigree. The English geologist John Michell speculated centuries ago that a celestial body with a radius 500 times greater than that of the sun, but with the same density, would possess an escape velocity at its surface equal to the speed of light, meaning that light could not escape: "all light emitted from such a body would be made to return towards it, by its own proper gravity." Theorizing about black holes picked up considerable momentum after Einstein, and during the past several decades in particular has been the focus of much speculation. It was Stephen Hawking who introduced the idea of the "event horizon" (the outer boundary of a black hole), and it was Hawking who in 1976 proposed that black holes were essentially omnivorous, swallowing not only matter but also information (although it was possible, he thought, that the information might escape into new "baby universes" forming inside the black hole). Hawking's ideas about information loss contradicted known laws of physics. They led to deep divisions among scientists, and a vast amount of science fiction.

Now, after years of fuss, Hawking has conceded error. At the last minute he contacted the organizers of the 17th

International Conference on General Relativity and Gravitation, to be held in Dublin. Hawking's message: "I have solved the black hole information paradox and I want to talk about it." When his turn came to speak at the conference, he had this to say: "I am sorry to disappoint science-fiction fans, but if you jump into a black hole, your mass energy will be returned to our universe, but in mangled form. There is no baby universe branching off, as I once thought." Emily Litella, a Gilda Radner character on *Saturday Night Live*, used to deliver editorial rants against "free Soviet jewelry" and "making Puerto Rico a steak," only to



correct herself meekly when informed of her error by a colleague. Stephen Hawking's comments in Dublin amounted to a cosmological "Never mind."

It is always a little disconcerting when audacious scientific theories come a cropper. Sometimes what is lost is not just a specific explanation but a whole way of thinking, an entire world view. Perhaps for that reason, old scientific theories do not wholly die. Oscar Wilde once observed that "science is the record of dead religions." He might have added, in a codicil, that "metaphor is the record of dead science."

The theory of black holes hasn't been discredited in its entirety, just one of its more intriguing postulates. But even if the theory itself were sucked into a black hole, it's hard to believe that the black-hole metaphor—for the bedrooms of certain children, the minds of certain friends, the legal status of certain detainees—wouldn't be around more or less forever. Here's *The Boston Globe* commenting on memories of the 1960s at Democratic conventions: "They loom stage left, a blur to many of us, a black hole to the rest." Here's the *Omaha World Herald* on the fortunes of a neighboring state: "While Iowa has been the center of the whirlwind at caucus time, by November the state usually has been sucked into a political black hole."

Theories rejected eons ago as inadequate for the narrow purposes of science have proved far too useful to reject in the broader world of normal life. The idea that a Great Flood once destroyed most life on the planet is now untenable, but we still think of antiquated people and ideas as being *antediluvian*, "before the deluge." I am aware, and accept, that ships sailing off to the horizon will not actu-

ally reach a place where the world ends and the oceans spill off into the void. But regardless of what the geographers say, "falling off the face of the earth" is something that happens—to fashions, to celebrities, to popular culture. It is the explanation for any number of phenomena: What happened to the huge surplus that Gore and Bush sparred over? Where are Erik Estrada and Menudo, Vanilla Ice and Andrew Dice Clay?

I know that technically the conception of Earth as lying at the center of the universe, as proposed by the Egyptian astronomer Ptolemy, is at odds with

125 YEARS AGO IN THE ATLANTIC

"Foreign Trade No Cure for Hard Times"

The flight of jobs overseas is a hot-button issue in the 2004 election. But the problem is by no means new. As this October 1879 editorial by William Vaughn Moody makes clear, concerns about losing jobs to developing nations have been with us for a long time.

It is well known that wages in India, like wages in China, are very low,—about ten cents a day.

To obtain the foreign market, we must therefore compete with fourteen, twenty, and twenty-four hours a day of work, for seven days in the week, with wages at ten cents a day, or sixty or seventy cents a week ...

We are doing all we can to make our people still poorer, to work for still lower wages, that we may undersell, not only England, but India; for to succeed we must undersell the cheapest ...

Thus, after thirteen years of national effort,—of legislation, of subsidizing, of treaties and conventions of every nature,—and superhuman efforts at cheap production, by the reduction of wages and salaries, the substitution of machinery for muscle, and the throwing of millions into idleness, we have got so far below the cost of manufacturing and producing in India, in Brazil, in England, as to increase or make a foreign market for our manufactures to the amount of one hundred million dollars, and of our general products of six hundred millions of dollars, per annum ...

[But] the time is not far distant when the textiles from the Chinese machine looms, iron and steel and cutlery from the Chinese furnaces, forges, and workshops, with everything that machinery and cheap labor can produce, will crowd every market. The four hundred millions of China, with the two hundred and fifty millions of India,—the crowded and pauperized populations of Asia,—will offer the cup of cheap machine labor, filled to the brim, to our lips, and force us to drink it to the dregs, if we do not learn wisdom. It is in Asia, if anywhere, that the world is to find its workshop. There are the masses, and the conditions, necessary to develop the power of cheapness to perfection, and they will be used.

[VOLUME 194, NO. 3, PAGES 29–30]

the established facts. But inadequate as it may be in cosmology, the Ptolemaic metaphor is relevant almost everywhere else. A natural-history exhibit was taken to task a few years ago for "a decidedly Ptolemaic view: the world revolves around New Jersey." Recently I saw an article about people whose lives revolve around their children—"Ptolemaic parenting," this was called. (I'm a committed Copernican myself.)

Reproductive specialists these days are understandably skeptical of the medieval notion that human beings grow to full size from a homunculus, a fully formed but hairless miniature person inhabiting sperm cells. But homunculus the metaphor continues to propagate. Usually it refers to some small, original version of a much larger thing (Wisconsin's welfare program was said to be the homunculus version of the federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996; Iceland's ancient parliament, the Althing, is the homunculus version of Congress), but it can also mean someone who resembles the homunculi depicted in illuminated treatises. I have seen the Oscar statuette referred to as a "gilded homunculus," and Aristotle Onassis as a "leathery homunculus and shipping tycoon." Gollum, Mini-Me, James Carville—in their vastly different ways they all promote homuncular vitality.

Obsolete science survives as metaphor in "philosopher's stone" (used by alchemists to turn base metals into gold) and "spontaneous generation" (the idea that life springs into existence out of nothing, or that things can happen without a cause). Both these concepts come up a lot in, for instance, discussions of economic policy. Phlogiston, the hypothetical element once thought to account for fire, gets pressed into service as a stand-in for any mythical causative substance. (Graham Greene regarded cholesterol as akin to phlogiston.) The Greek physiologist Galen believed that four "humours"—phlegm, black bile, yellow bile, and blood—accounted for all bodily functions and human behavior, an antiquated conceit that no reputable scientist would now endorse. But one still hears references to "the humours," and personally I think that a mere four

elements—solipsism, debt, litigation, and hype—could easily explain about 90 percent of human activity.

Psychoanalysis is a nearly boundless category unto itself. It has not yet succumbed totally to the inroads of Prozac and Paxil, but even if drugs come to dominate the clinical future, the concepts of id, ego, superego, Oedipus complex, repression, and the rest are unlikely to atrophy in normal discourse. Superego is conscience, morality, authority—*Consumer Reports*, the *Boy Scout Handbook*, Pope John Paul II. The id is the unconscious, the source of instinctual, sometimes shameful, impulses. The actor Jim Carrey was once described as "an insatiable, rampaging id," what's left over "once the layers of civilization have been peeled away." Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* has been called "an emblem of the national id." The Super Bowl halftime show, *Fear Factor*, talk radio—all these things are manifestations of id. An automobile expert had this to say in *The Washington Post* about how SUV manufacturers balance consumer desires and safety: "There is this fine line that they walk between id and superego."

"Relativity"? "Big Bang"? "Quantum leap"? "Natural selection"? "The uncertainty principle"? These terms are associated with ideas that are very much alive and in good theoretical standing, but who doubts that we'd still employ them metaphorically even if the underlying scientific concepts were shelved? All I know about chaos theory is what Jeff Goldblum explained in *Jurassic Park*; as actual science the whole concept may be overblown. But as an expression of ordinary social dynamics—the Enron scandal, the Kennedy family, the reconstruction of Iraq—there is clearly something to it.

A few weeks after Hawking's announcement Paul Ginsparg, a professor of physics at Cornell, published a newspaper commentary suggesting that the back-pedaling may have been premature—that Hawking's ideas might not in fact be antediluvian, and could still turn out to be right. As Emily Litella might have observed, the situation is now in a great steak of uncertainty. ■
Cullen Murphy is The Atlantic's managing editor.



FOOD

Good-bye, Cryovac

Imagine college food for which students will fake IDs, write rap songs, and line up outside the dining-hall door

BY CORBY KUMMER

I recently washed up after a supper consisting of four kinds of vegetables from the farmers' market—all four of them vegetables I usually buy at the local right-minded supermarket. As I considered the vivid, distinctive flavor of every bite, I thought, What is that *stuff* I've been eating the rest of the year?

One of the twelve residential colleges at Yale University is trying to give students that kind of summertime epiphany at every meal, by serving dishes made from produce raised as close to New Haven as possible. In just two years the Yale Sustainable Food Project has launched two ambitious initiatives to bridge the distance from farm to table: the complete revamping

of menus in Berkeley College's dining hall to respect seasonality and simplicity, and the conversion of an overgrown lot near campus to an Edenic organic garden. The garden does not supply the dining hall—it couldn't. Rather, it serves as a kind of Greenwich Mean Time, suggesting what is best to serve, and when, by illustrating what grows in the southern New England climate in any given week. The goal of the project is to sell students on the superior flavor of food raised locally in environmentally responsible (but not always organic) ways, so that they will seek it the rest of their lives.

A few dishes I tasted last summer during a pre-term recipe-testing mar-

athon in Berkeley's kitchen convinced me that this goal is within reach for any college meals program willing to make an initial outlay for staff training and an ongoing investment in fewer but better ingredients. I would be happy to eat pasta with parsnips once a week, for example, the candy-sweet roots sharpened by fresh parsley and Parmesan. In fact, I demanded the recipe. Any restaurant would be pleased to serve fresh asparagus roasted with a subtle seasoning of balsamic vinegar and olive oil alongside, say, filet of beef. Even the chicken breasts, coated with black pepper, grilled, and served with a shallot, garlic, and white-wine sauce, tasted like chicken.

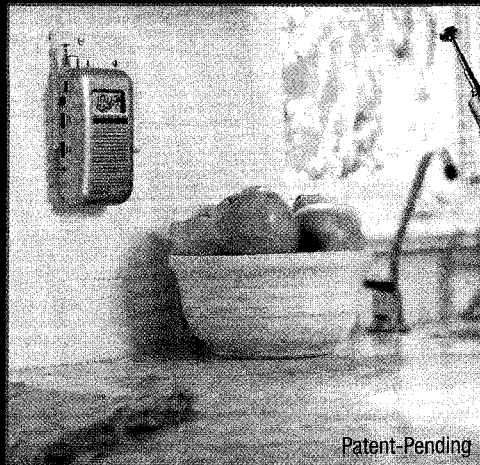
Not long ago a college would never have thought to mention food in a brochure or on a school tour—except, perhaps, in a deprecating aside. Now food is a competitive marketing tool, and by the second or third stop on the college circuit parents and students practically expect to be shown the organic salad bar and told about the vegan options and the menus resulting directly from student surveys. Yale has gone these colleges what I consider to be a giant step further, showing students what they should want and making them want it.

As caring about food has become interwoven with caring about the environment, enjoying good food has lost some of the elitist, hedonistic taint that long barred gourmets from the ranks of the politically correct. The challenge, as with any political movement, is to bring about practical institutional change that incorporates ideals.

It's a very big challenge with college food, almost all of which is provided by enormous catering companies like Sodexho, Chartwells, and Aramark, the company that has run Yale's dining services since 1998. These companies have long offered vegetarian, organic, and vegan choices. But none of those options—not even, sadly, going organic—necessarily supports local farmers and local economies, or shows students how much better food tastes when it's made from scratch with what's fresh. Vegetarian, organic, and vegan

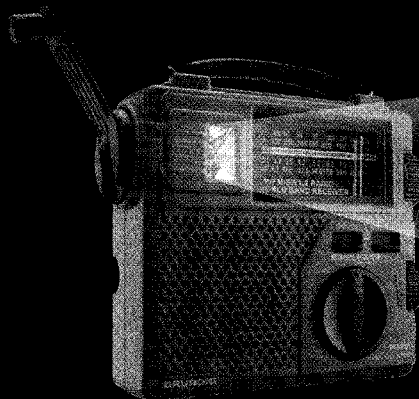
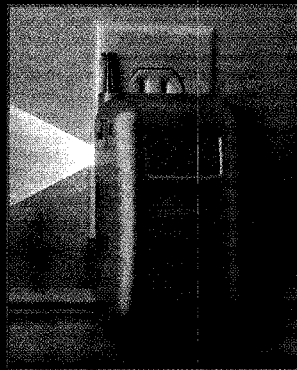
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foods can all be processed, overseasoned, and generally gunked up, and in the hands of institutional food-service providers they usually are.

The first step in showing that there is a better way is to give people something raw and ravishing, like a Sweet 100 cherry tomato or a ripe peach. The next step is to get them into a garden to pick tomatoes or sugar-snap peas or strawberries. This is often the deal-closer, which is why the activist and restaurateur Alice Waters worked so hard to create the Edible Schoolyard, a program that brings elementary school students into a garden and the garden into the curriculum and the cafeteria. Her decade-long effort at a pilot school in Berkeley, California, blossomed last June, when the school board voted unanimously to incorporate the Edible Schoolyard program into every one of its schools.

In college, gardens offer students the psychic and physical release of manual labor, and serve the invaluable purpose of distraction from term papers and exams. They can be laboratories for any number of classes, but their chief utility seems to be as a spiritual oasis. Middlebury College, in Vermont, has for two years supported a student-run organic garden that Bill McKibben, a scholar in residence there, calls in his forthcoming *Wandering Home: A Long Walk Through America's Most Hopeful Region* the most beautiful spot on campus. Some of the food from Middlebury's garden is served in the dining halls, and the dining service has instituted a buying program that favors local products when possible.

The Sustainable Food Project goes further, by serving seasonal dishes and local produce at every meal—the plunge other institutions hesitate to take. Changing the way a school orders and prepares food is an expensive, time-consuming ordeal. Students may say they want one thing and then eat another. Cooks are likely to be skeptical or downright hostile toward menus that may offer fewer items with fewer ingredients but require far more labor.

Given that Waters once got Bill Clinton fired up about planting an organic garden on the White House lawn, it

was unsurprising that she proposed a student garden and better food when she first met Yale's president, Richard Levin. The occasion was a reception for freshmen and their parents in the fall of 2001; Waters's daughter, Fanny, had just arrived on campus, and the families soon discovered that both Fanny and the Levins' daughter Becca had attended the Mountain School of Milton Academy, in Vershire, Vermont, where high school juniors spend a term learning to farm organically. The master of the coincidentally named Berkeley College, John Rogers, signed on enthusiastically, and Waters recruited young people to help run both the new meals program and the garden. She also found a donor who anonymously underwrote the added expense of hiring directors for the project, planting the garden, and changing the college's food.

Like most programs in which Waters has been instrumental, the Yale Sustainable Food Project at a distance sounds high-minded and precious, conceivable only in a liberal redoubt like Berkeley or New Haven. Also like most programs Waters is involved in, the project up close is simple, earthy, and immensely appealing. All those ideals result in straightforward, perfectly fresh food you'd like to eat—and even wash up after—every day.

I found it hard to believe that really good food was being served at Yale. My memories of undergraduate food there were of working around it as best I could—spending a lot of time at the salad bar and cooking at friends' and advisers' houses whenever possible. The food at a reunion I attended a year ago was startlingly unmemorable—reunions, after all, are usually the time when schools put on the dog, to elicit donations along with memories of happy golden bygone days. The dark, sticky communal tables of Commons, the large building where freshmen took meals, certainly brought back memories, and so did the carrots devoid of flavor and the brown if-this-is-a-reunion-it-must-be-beef. It seemed improbable that even a force as relentless as I know Alice Waters to be could make much of a dent.

On my summer visit I spoke at length with the people who would be the toughest sell in any such scheme, tougher even than a conservative administration: the cooks. No matter how many enlightened, organic-oriented chefs came in to consult on menus (and several did), any new program would need the buy-in of those cooks, who—despite Yale's turbulent history with unions—have worked there for years. An early enthusiast was the college's "first" cook (of three), Michael Schoen, who had been a Yale chef for twenty-six years. Schoen, an easygoing man who enjoys his work, had helped introduce "natural food" and vegan dishes into various college dining halls, he told me, but the Sustainable Food Project menus required something completely new: peeling and chopping carrots and onions and celery and garlic rather than opening Cryovac bags of pre-chopped soup base and jars of peeled garlic cloves.

Catherine Jones, a Waters recruit who had worked in the kitchen of Waters's Chez Panisse and at several food magazines, told me about arriving as a food manager just as the project was getting started. Waters had warned her that a school kitchen would be very different from a restaurant, and Jones soon saw why. "I was used to talking to cooks who wanted to open a restaurant and would do anything it would take to get ahead," she told me. "Here it all has to be in the job description." She faced a hurdle even higher than her highfalutin restaurant experience: as a Yale graduate she was breaching a usually inviolate town-gown barrier, and was subject to teasing and worse.

The cooks did need some help through what they described as the chaos of the first few months. "Jicama and daikon," Dawn Boulas, the head pantry cook, said to me. "They come in and you think, *What is this?* You're expected to make salad for four hundred people in two hours and put it out for lunch. The beginning was not pleasant."

Soon enough the problem shifted from whether the cooks would be willing to prepare the food to whether there would be enough to feed all the students who wanted it. Lines formed

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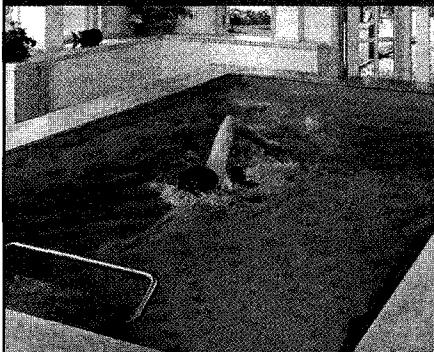
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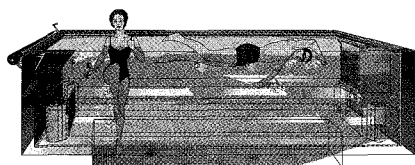
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out the dining-hall door whenever hamburgers made of grass-fed beef from Wolfe's Neck Farm were on the menu. One night when scallions were in season, the cooks set out a few pans of whole scallions roasted with just olive oil and salt. They assumed that most students would think them peculiar and leave them; in fifteen minutes, Schoen told me, the pans were empty. Reports circulated of faked Berkeley ID cards. Students at Pierson, another residential college, recorded a rap song about how hard it was to get to eat at Berkeley, and the MP3 made the college rounds.

Embracing the superiority of local food was easier than obeying the seasons. "Students couldn't get over the difference between the salad bar here and in other colleges," Melina Shannon-DiPietro, the co-director of the Sustainable Food Project, told me. "They'd say, 'The tomatoes—they're so flavorful!' We'd say they had flavor because they came from a farm ten miles away, not from California." But once tomato season was over, students still wanted tomatoes, and so did cooks. Catherine Jones recalled trying to physically bar Berkeley cooks from bringing tomatoes from Calhoun, the residential college next door, to the Berkeley salad bar. Certain rules of seasonality seemed arbitrary, Jones admitted: no cantaloupes when they were out of season in New England, but bananas year-round, because even though they don't grow in most of this country, they aren't limited by a season where they do grow. In the case of foods, like bananas and coffee, that can't be supplied locally, the program tries to buy Fair Trade products.

Once the frenzy of adjustment had passed, the cooks began to enjoy themselves. They visited nearby farms and learned about some of the vegetables that had mystified them; they invited farmers to drop by their kitchens. Dawn Boulas devised several salad dressings, and cut and toasted her own croutons. After seventeen years of preparing ordinary dining-hall food, Boulas has become such a convert that her friends tease her about the thirty-odd heirloom tomato plants in her home garden. Diderot Desgrottes, a fourth cook hired

to help with the extra work, e-mailed his sister in Haiti to ask how to make the carrots *blanchies*, steamed and baked in a béchamel, that they grew up eating. Aldo Gargamelli, the second cook and a fifteen-year veteran, experimented with soups. "Everything is fresh," he told me, still marveling after almost a year. "The quality is so much better. I don't think any of us wants to go back to what we were using."

Frequent visits to the new garden down the road helped open the cooks' eyes and palates. It was the challenge of creating the garden that attracted Josh Viertel, the other co-director of the Sustainable Food Project. Viertel, who grew up in the New York suburbs, discovered a vocation for farming during a term at the Mountain School; after graduating from Harvard (also Shannon-DiPietro's alma mater) he ran a profitable organic vegetable garden in Connecticut. He'd been determined to move to California when Waters persuaded him to stay east.

As soon as Yale approved the use of a lot as a garden, a process that consumed the project's first months, Viertel and a group of student volunteers made remarkable progress. They arrived with axes on May 25 of last year to cut down trees, pull out old roots and new poison ivy, and clear garbage, and by mid-July they were selling produce at the New Haven farmers' market. After the fall term began, students would get to the garden at seven-thirty on Saturday mornings to help pick for the market. "Love, money, or wild horses couldn't get me up at that hour in college," Viertel told me. "They're knocking bumblebees out of squash blossoms, and they love it."

Several professors plan to use the garden and the Food Project for research and as lecture material. Kelly Brownell, a psychology professor who researches eating and weight, plans to study how eating fresh produce affects academic performance and whether students who eat more sugar-snaps eat fewer Doritos. Perhaps the Yale School of Management will use the garden to research the economics of small-scale farming, which has long been in crisis all over New England.

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Viertel plans to build a stone pizza oven in the garden, so that visiting school-children can watch tomatoes they pick go straight onto pizza and eat it on the spot. He wants students to get excited every spring about asparagus and cherries. Shannon-DiPietro wants all graduates to leave feeling completely comfortable about cooking a pasta dish and roast chicken.

Even if he can't grow food for the dining halls, Viertel has found local farms that can, and has impressively managed to integrate them into the Yale/Aramark ordering system. He tells nearby farmers that he will buy their entire crops of eggplant or squash or lettuce if they can deliver either straight to the dining hall or to a Hartford warehouse used by one of the university's wholesale suppliers. Of course, this is more expensive: the per-plate cost at Berkeley last year, he says, was roughly one and a half times the cost at Yale's other colleges.

Whatever the argument for spending more money on food (and Viertel has many eloquent ones, involving taking care of yourself and your community and the environment), the practical successes at Yale should encourage other schools to consider similar changes. Viertel gives the example of granola, a simple seduction tool. At the beginning of this year the Food Project's formula of organic oats, almonds, and raisins, a local honey, and New England maple syrup was so popular that Commons had to take over making it for every college. And the project's recipe is actually cheaper than buying pre-made granola in bulk. Viertel recently began a composting program; the first step is asking students to scrape their own plates, which shows close up the waste involved when they take, say, just one bite of cheese lasagne. Other schools ought to take that same step, even if they stop there.

As we spoke, sitting on stone steps in the late-afternoon sun, a white van carrying the Berkeley cooks passed by and beeped hello. Viertel's thoughts turned to the next phase in the project: a limited roll-out of two dozen dishes to be rotated through the other resi-



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3

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Number of corks a Rabbit can pull without breaking down*

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10

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Number of Rabbits sold between January 1, 2000 and January 1, 2004.

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Guesstimate of how many American dads are looking for a Rabbit for Father's Day.

**Independent lab test assumed spiral replacement after 1,000 cork pulls.*

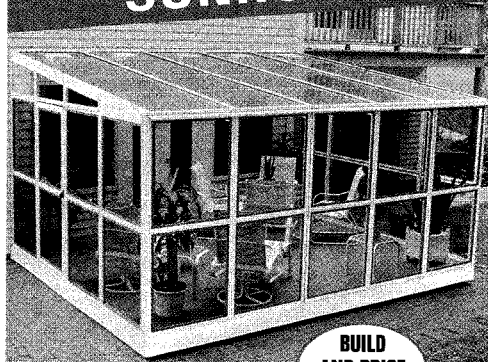
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ANSWERS TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLER



"Chain Links"

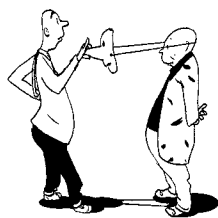
The chains form the terms **DOUBLE HELIX** and **NUCLEOTIDES**. Links are formed by A and T, C and G, standard symbols for the nucleotide bases adenine, thymine, cytosine, and guanine, which connect strands of DNA. Links: a. TWI(X)T b. MALT + A c. GE(T)OFF d. TO + PIC e. TH(e) + WART f. CLYDE (hidden) g. MANI(O)C h. A + SH + RAM i. TU(ARE)C j. ANGST (anag.) k. BRAND + T l. GU(L + L)Y Across: 7. CAUCHO (anag.) 9. A + GEE 10. AL(B)ERT + A 11. S(YN)OD (NY rev.) 12. A + ESIR (rise rev.) 16. E + D(IF)IED 18. (n)OISE 20. P + OLDER Down: 1. (o)RANG(e) 2. AN + DEAN 3. NIGER (anag.) 4. G(L)ORY 5. S + LIT 6. BAT(S)MEN (absent anag.) 8. LAER + TES (rev.) 13. S(AIL) + OR 14. LIPPI (homophone) 15. WORTH (anag.) 17. D + HOW 19. (u)S(e) + OF + A

dential colleges this year. "It's like trying to open eleven restaurants at once," he said, fretting. The university had committed to paying for one year any expansion costs not covered by alumni gifts. "A lot of colleges are watching us," Viertel told me. Princeton, Brown, Harvard, and other schools sent representatives to a conference sponsored by the project last November, and others call fairly regularly. "They know the demand is there, know students want it. The question is always cost and whether they can pull it off with their staff."

The cooks, too, were fretting. They had perfected twenty-four recipes they considered foolproof—lentils with organic canned tomatoes and cumin, spinach salad with pine nuts and raisins in a lemon vinaigrette—and were gearing up to spend the rest of the summer teaching cooks from the other colleges how to do things their way. No one was sure how the sessions would go: many other cooks took a no-way stance toward the project, and during the school year it had been hard to find fill-ins when someone from the Berkeley kitchen was vacationing or ill. "The other chefs think we're uppity," Michael Schoen said.

The Berkeley cooks will have to wait until the end of the school year to see if they have made fellow converts. They realized the depth of their own conversion only at the end of the first year, when they received the reunion menus. For one weekend they were to revert to the same ingredients and recipes each host college would serve. Bags of cut-up vegetables arrived that Boulas "would have killed for" a few months before, she told me. "Smell this!" Aldo Gargamelli told the kitchen at large, rubbing chunks of pre-diced onions in his hands and then throwing them away. He went to the walk-in refrigerator and got out bags of onions and carrots. Boulas opened a jar of peeled garlic cloves, took a whiff, and closed it. She separated cloves of fresh garlic and started peeling. Weeks later, when I visited, the jar was still in a corner of the walk-in, its contents untouched. ▀

Corby Kummer, a senior editor of The Atlantic, is the author of The Pleasures of Slow Food (2002) and The Joy of Coffee (revised 2003).



THE PUZZLER

by EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON

Cryptic Journey

A wandering journey is traced by the shaded path in the diagram. Moving generally top to bottom and proceeding left, right, up, or down but never diagonally, this path spells out the names of the journeying fellows, one of whom puts his 9 Down in 32 Down. Solve the puzzle as a diagramless; no bars or numbers are shown in the grid, but clues reflect proper sequence and numbering, and the finished puzzle displays 180° symmetry. Answers include seven capitalized words.

Last month's Puzzler solution is on page 202.

ACROSS

1. Upon reflection, top Austen novel's problems
6. Shelter, except for the first garden spot
10. Tear on the outside of organ seat (*two words*)
11. Girl in the Alps vocalized soprano note
12. Spry maid improved broad-based works
13. Elmer Fudd for one song we hear
14. Care about large level tracts
15. Utter sentence in jail the wrong way
17. One running baseball card company
19. Tests for ethics starting on the 2nd
21. Land back in elementary Latin
23. Fairy King in love: "Be right over"
25. Pass through peaks like Pops
27. Look embarrassed and horse around
28. Message received from ogre wandering Middle-earth
29. Dish in Southern America and Hawaii
31. Use deduction in finer cryptic
33. Mr. Young's debt problem returned
35. Light convertible I get in
36. Bouquet of daisies or roses using just the heads
37. Element of rule in Mobile

38. Shaped like a sphere or stratum
39. Some horn-honking that is for "babe"
40. Botch soybean paste packed with vitamin
41. Brine and sweat are different

DOWN

1. Dee destroying small rotisserie remnants
2. Necklace lifted off the bottom (said item reserved)
3. Changing my lane as a bully would
4. Opening with one sound of Morse
5. Audibly blew out, and traveled on an alternate route (*two words*)
7. Given new treads, or junked
8. Bee-bit forms of life
9. Band leader in garage's center
12. A seal put at sea levels
16. Tuned a lute to E for children's song
18. Somewhat repellent name to call a lady
20. Nuts or kernels, with one floating
22. Apes some warriors for an audience
24. Around this spot, tot is stuck
26. Con gets in a Ford model
28. Go back to nurturing Reginald before fight
30. Society fops and know-it-alls
32. Reversed low-down fate
34. Chief of mountain tribe in Colorado (that's not saying much)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.



WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

Do cultural anthropologists know about this? Do laundry-detergent marketing executives? Going through the dirty-clothes hamper to find something clean enough to wear is rampant in our land. At any rate, an astonishing number of people who responded to May's request for a word to describe this activity admitted that they drew on personal experience.

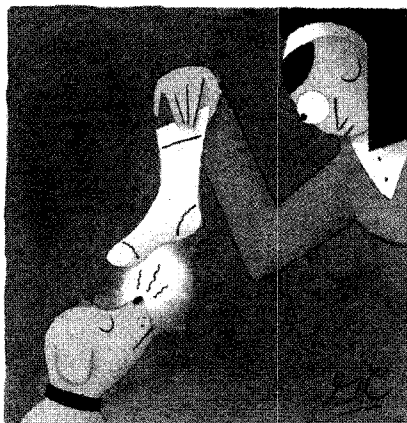
"Too often in the morning I find myself frantically pawing through the hamper, hoping that my mother-in-law won't come knocking at the door and catch me," Nils Jonsson, of Sugar Land, Texas, told us. The term that Jonsson (among others) coined to describe what he does is *skivvy-dipping*. "My husband *snifferentiates* the foul shirts from the merely stale while getting dressed in the morning," Jara Kern, of New York City, wrote. Denise Mathew, of Charlottesville, Virginia, confessed, "In my home this process occurs weekly at least." Taking a mind-over-matter approach, she calls what she does *brainwashing*.

Here's an optimist—Jessica Chaiken, of Washington, D.C., who wrote, "According to my current theory of *laundry composting*, the heat and pressure of the top layer of clothing will clean the bottom layer. I'm still working on this theory. I'm sure there's a government grant out there somewhere!" Here's a realist—Noel Trout, of Los Angeles, who wrote, "My wife, Cathy, and I have done our share of *snifting* while trying to find something suitable in the dirty-clothes pile (we won't even claim our dirty clothes make it into a hamper)." Here's an intellectual—William Weaver, of New York City, who wrote, "To call it a dirty-clothes hamper is to overstate the case. For many of us, the hamper is like an overstock bin where clothes go into a complex holding pattern, and a quick *windventory* will often produce a perfectly respectable outfit."

And here's someone remembering a

morning she'd probably rather forget—Amy Herzberg, of Fayetteville, Arkansas. She wrote, "Recently I rummaged through my laundry hamper to find something to wear to an important meeting. In the kitchen I forced my husband to sniff my armpits to ensure my secret would be safe. At that exact moment our overnight guest appeared in the doorway. We all froze. No one spoke. Then we sat down to breakfast as if nothing had happened." Herzberg's term for what she was doing is *desperspirationalizing*.

Top honors go to Jill Geisler, of Bay-side, Wisconsin. Although she wasn't the



only person to come up with her coinage, she explained it succinctly and well. "This process is familiar to anyone who has or has been a teenager. I believe this laundry alternative is known as *dry gleanings*."

The other fugitive sought in May was a word for the "ability of a traffic light to sense my approach and turn red, knowing it is me." Not everyone who responded thought this was something worth naming. Scott Barolo, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, wrote, "I believe I can diagnose the belief that traffic patterns revolve around oneself: *carcissism*."

Most respondents, however, were willing to go along with the idea that a traffic light might have paranormal powers. M. Vincenzo Scrimenti, of Erie, Pennsylvania, wrote, "Sometimes if I run through a yellow light for which

I probably should have stopped, upon returning to that light I notice this phenomenon. I believe that the light thinks I have undermined its authority, and it becomes *self-lighteous*." Derek P. Pullan, of Heber City, Utah, wrote, "When I was a teenager, I worked two summers in the traffic division of the county public-works department. With this vast experience, I suggest the following word: *semaphoreknowledge*."

Holly Folk, of Bloomington, Indiana, wrote to say that she thinks "a conscious (and malicious?) traffic light is *claret-voyant*." Rick Blanco, of Warwick, Rhode Island, suggested, "The traffic light senses *bad carma*."

But top honors go to Max Frankel, of New York City, for his simple but elegant coinage *redtribution*.

Now JOHN F. SCHILKE, of Oregon City, Oregon, asks, "What is a word to describe someone who, in looking up a word in the dictionary, is compelled to look across the page for another, equally interesting entry?"

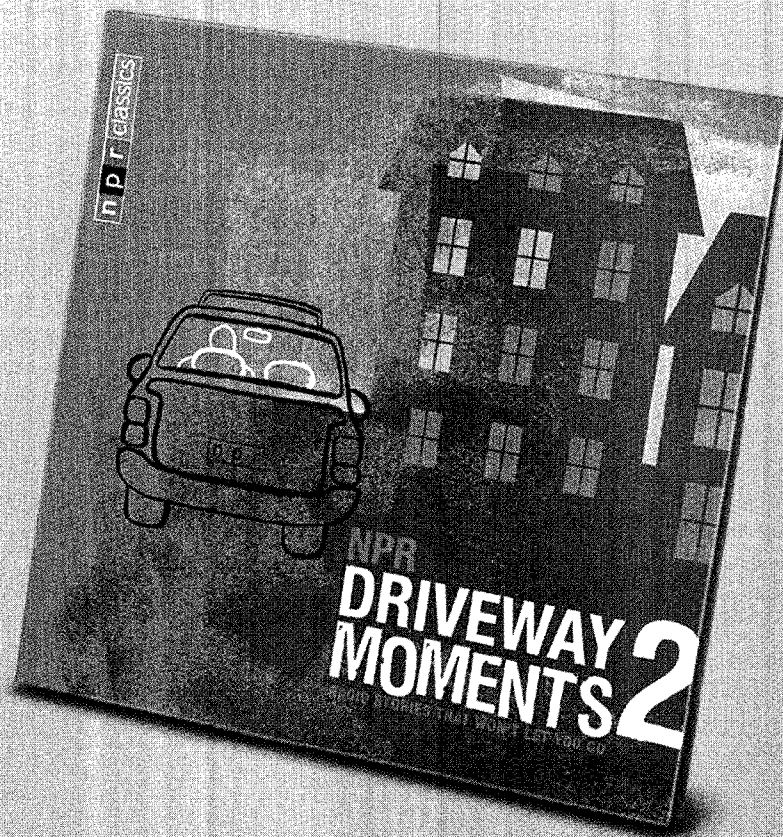
And KATHERINE BRYANT, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, writes, "This seems to happen frequently. One says in an e-mail message that one is attaching some document or file and then hits the 'send' button before remembering to attach the file. What would be a term for this?"

Send words that meet John Schilke's or Katherine Bryant's needs to Word Fugitives, The Atlantic Monthly, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or visit the Word Fugitives page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by October 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like The Atlantic's help in finding. Letters become the property of Word Fugitives and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment's correspondents will be sent Florence of Arabia, by Christopher Buckley; Sarge, by Scott Stossel; and The Outlaw Sea, by William Langewiesche.

GREG CLARKE

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The Twentieth-Century Darwin

Francis Crick (1916–2004)

BY MARK STEYN

Francis Crick is dead and gone. He has certainly not “passed on”—and if he has, he’ll be extremely annoyed about it. As a twelve-year-old English schoolboy, he decided he was an atheist, and for much of the rest of his life he worked hard to disprove the existence of the soul.

In between he “discovered the secret of life,” as he crowed to the barmaids and regulars at The Eagle, his Cambridge pub, on a triumphant night in 1953. The opening sentence of his paper, written with his colleague Jim Watson and published in *Nature* that year, put it more modestly: “We wish to suggest a structure for the salt of deoxyribose nucleic acid.”

That’s DNA to you and me. And it’s thanks to Crick and Watson that we know the acronym and that it has passed into the language as the contemporary shorthand for our core identity. Your career choice? “She says being a part of academia seemed to be hard-wired into her DNA because her father was a professor at the University of Virginia” (the *Chicago Tribune*). Socio-economic inequality? “Income distribution appears to be hard-wired into the DNA of a nation” (*The Washington Post*). New trends in rock video? “Staying cool is hard-wired into the DNA of MTV” (the *Los Angeles Times*).

Francis Crick was the most important biologist of the twentieth century. Like Darwin, he changed the way we think of ourselves. First, with Watson, he came up with one of the few scientific blueprints known to the public: the double-helix structure of DNA (though he left it to Mrs. Crick, usually a painter of nudes, to create the model). Later, with Sydney Brenner, he unraveled the universal genetic code. Today Crick’s legacy includes all the thorniest questions of our time—genetic fingerprinting, stem-cell research, pre-screening for hereditary diseases, the

“gay gene,” and all the other “genes of the week.” In Britain they’re arguing about a national DNA database; on the Continent anti-globalists are protesting genetically modified crops; in America it was traces of, um, DNA on Monica’s blue dress that obliged Bill Clinton to change his story. If you’re really determined, you can still just about ignore DNA—the O.J. jury did. But, increasingly, it’s the currency of the age.

“We were lucky with DNA,” he said. “Like America, it was just waiting to be

which he spent developing mines at the British Admiralty’s research laboratory. Afterward he decided that his main interests were the “big-picture” questions, the ones arising from his rejection of God, the ones that seemed beyond the power of science. Crick reckoned that the “mystery of life” could be easily understood if you just cleared away all the mysticism we’ve chosen to surround it with.

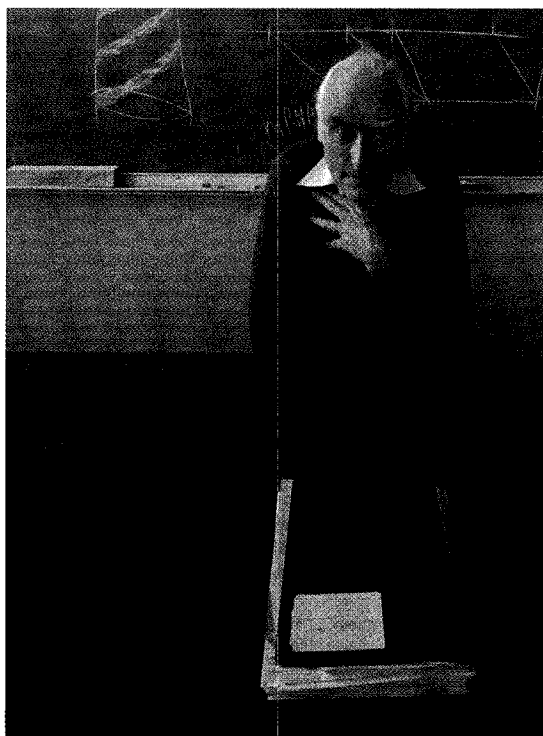
That’s the difference between Darwin and Crick. Evolution, whatever offense it gives, by definition emphasizes how far man has come from his tree-swinging forebears. DNA, in contrast, seems reductive. Man and chimp share 98.5 percent of their genetic code, which would be no surprise to Darwin. But we also share 75 percent of our genetic makeup with the pumpkin. The pumpkin is just a

big, ridged, orange lump lying on the ground all day, like a fat retiree on the beach in Florida. But other than that he has no discernible human characteristics until your kid carves them into him.

Yet the point of DNA is not just to prove that the pumpkin is our kin but to pump him for useful information. According to Monise Durrani, a BBC science correspondent, the genetic blueprint of a humble worm is proving useful in the study of Alzheimer’s. As Durrani says, “Although we like to think we are special, our genes bring us down to earth ... We all evolved from the same soup of chemicals.” It turns

out there *is* a fly in my soup—and a chimp and a worm and a pumpkin.

Having found “the secret of life,” what do you do for an encore? Crick disliked celebrity, and had a standard reply card printed to fend off his fellow man: “Dr. Crick thanks you for your letter but regrets that he is unable to accept your kind invitation to ...” There then followed a checklist of options with a tick by the relevant item: “send an autograph,” “provide a photograph,”



discovered.” But Crick was an unlikely Columbus. The son of a boot-factory owner, he grew up in the English Midlands, dabbling in the usual scientific experiments of small boys—blowing up bottles, and so forth—but never really progressing beyond. Indeed, as a scientist he wasn’t one for conducting experiments. What he did was think, and even then it took him a while to think out what he ought to be thinking about. His studies were interrupted by the war,

"appear on your radio or TV show," "cure your disease," and so on. This is a view of man as 75 percent pumpkin but capable of crude, predictable, repetitive patterns of imposition on more advanced forms of life. Dr. Crick also automatically turned down honorary degrees and disdained the feudal honors offered by the British state (though he eventually relented and accepted an invitation from the Queen to join her most elite Order of Merit). Religion he never let up on. The university at which he practiced his science is filled with ancient college chapels, whose presence so irked Crick that when the new Churchill College invited him to become a fellow, he agreed to do so only on condition that no chapel be built on the grounds. In 1963, when a benefactor offered to fund a chapel and Crick's fellow fellows voted to take the money, he refused to accept the argument that many at the college would appreciate a place of worship and that those who didn't were not obliged to enter it. He offered to fund a brothel on the same basis, and when that was rejected, he resigned.

His militant atheism was good-humored but fierce, and it drove him away from molecular biology. As the key to the mystery of life, DNA seemed a small answer to the big picture, so Crick pushed on, advancing the theory of "Directed Panspermia," which is not a Clinton DNA joke but his and his colleague Leslie Orgel's explanation for how life began. Concerned by the narrow time frame—to those of a non-creationist bent—between the cooling of the earth and the rapid emergence of the planet's first life forms, Crick determined to provide another explanation for the origin of life. As he put it, bouncing along a tenuous chain of probabilities,

The first self-replicating system is believed to have arisen spontaneously in the "soup," the weak solution of organic chemicals formed in the oceans, seas, and lakes by the action

of sunlight and electric storms. Exactly how it started we do not know ...

The universe began much earlier. Its exact age is uncertain but a figure of 10 to 15 billion years is not too far out ...

Although we do not know for certain, we suspect that there are in the galaxy many stars with planets suitable for life ...

Could life have first started much earlier on the planet of some distant star, perhaps eight to 10 billion years ago? If so, a higher civilization, similar to ours, might have developed from it at about the time that the Earth was formed ... Would they have had the urge and the technology to spread life through the wastes of space and seed these sterile planets, including our own? ...

For such a job, bacteria are ideal. Since they are small, many of them can be sent. They can be stored almost indefinitely at very low temperatures, and the chances are they would multiply easily in the "soup" of the primitive ocean.

"We do not know," "uncertain," "not too far out," "we do not know for certain," "we suspect," "chances are ..." And thus the Nobel Prize winner embraced the theory that space aliens sent rocket ships to seed the earth. The man of science who confidently dismissed God at Mill Hill School half a century earlier appears not to have noticed that he'd merely substituted for his culturally inherited monotheism a weary variant on Greco-Roman-Norse pantheism—the gods in the skies who fertilize the earth and then retreat to the heavens beyond our reach. Dr. Crick's hyper-rationalism took fifty years to lead him round to embracing a belief in a celestial creator of human life—indeed, a *deus ex machina*.

He didn't see it that way, of course. His last major work, *The Astonishing Hypothesis*, was a full-scale assault on human feeling. "The Astonishing Hypothesis," trumpeted Crick, "is that 'You,' your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior

of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules."

It's not a new idea. Round about the time Dr. Crick was working on his double helix, Cole Porter wrote a song for a surly Soviet lass fending off the attentions of an amorous American:

When the electromagnetic of
the he-male
Meets the electromagnetic
of the female
If right away she should say this
is *the* male
It's A Chemical Reaction, That's All.

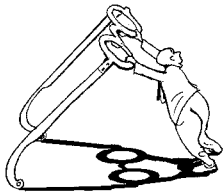
Of course, in the film *Silk Stockings*, Cyd Charisse eventually succumbs to Fred Astaire and comes to understand that her thesis is not the final word. Even if The Astonishing Hypothesis—that there's no "You," no thoughts, no feelings, no falling in love, no free will—is true, it's so all-encompassing as to be useless except to the most sinister eugenicists.

And in the end Francis Crick's own life seems to disprove it. He was never a dry or pompous scientist, he liked jokes and costume parties, he was a late starter with one great obsession. Perhaps the combination of human quirks and sparks that drove him to chase his double helix are merely a chemical formula no different in principle from that which determines variations in the pumpkin patch. But even if Francis Crick is 75 percent the same as a pumpkin, the degree of difference between him and even the savviest Hubbard squash suggests that as a unit of measurement it doesn't quite capture the scale of that difference.

It is too late to retreat now. Francis Crick set us on the path to a biotechnological era that may yet be only an intermediate stage to a post-human future. But just as a joke that's explained is no longer funny, so in his final Astonishing Hypothesis, Dr. Crick eventually arrived at the logical end: you can unmask the mystery of humanity only by denying our humanity. ■

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The Atlantic Monthly (ISSN 1072-7825) is published monthly except for a combined issue in January/February and July/August by The Atlantic Monthly Group, 77 N. Washington St., Boston, MA 02114 (617-854-7700). Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA, Toronto, Ont., and additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription queries: Atlantic Customer Care, Box 37585, Boone, IA 50037-0585 (or call 800-234-2411). Privacy: We make portions of our customer list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe you may enjoy. If you do not want to receive this information, please write to the Customer Care address above. Advertising (202-266-6000) and Circulation (202-266-7205): 600 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Subscriptions: one year \$39.95 in the U.S. and poss.; add \$8.00 in Canada, includes GST (123209926); add \$15.00 elsewhere. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement 0261327. Back issues: send \$7.50 per copy to The Atlantic, Back Issues, 1900 Industrial Park Dr., Federalsburg, MD 21632 (or call 410-754-8219). Vol. 294, No. 3, October 2004. Copyright © 2004, by The Atlantic Monthly Group. All rights reserved. Postmaster: Send address changes to Atlantic Address Change, Box 37585, Boone, IA 50037-0585.



PROPER-NAME INDEX

by BENJAMIN HEALY

VOLUME 294 NO. 3 / OCTOBER 2004

- Abu-Jamal**, Mumia, as dreadlocked cause célèbre, 179
- Akinola**, Peter, Nigerian archbishop, as Anglican factionalist, 13
- Ariès**, Philippe, slightly discredited historian of childhood, 163
- Ashanti**, as neither Brandy nor Beyoncé, 106
- Atatürk**, Kemal, Turkish secularizer, Prussian tendencies of, 191
- Baer**, Neal, *ER* producer, as distinguished graduate of Colorado College, 130
- Banks**, Dennis, AIM leader, as not Russell Banks, 106
- Banks**, Russell, novelist, as not Russell Means, 106
- Barber**, Michael, spurned Powell biographer, as "uninspiring figure," 163; as author of pretty good bad book, 163
- Barbie**, as totem of overwork, 171
- Bean**, Orson, as neither Orson Welles nor George Orwell, 103
- Bin Laden**, Osama, nuclear ambitions of, 58; popular support for, 59; as "person who's now been marginalized," 89; central role of in al-Qaeda, 89; escape of, 91-94; whereabouts of, 89-100; apparently healthy kidneys of, 90; as equestrian, 90; as "poor slave of God," 94; potential afterlife of, 100
- Black**, Cofer, former counterterrorism chief, as headhunter, 96-98; as non-Ahab, 98
- Blakely**, Ralph, kidnapper, sentencing chaos and, 50-53
- Bovary**, Charles, as chump, 175
- Bovary**, Emma, tongue of, 179
- Bush**, George W., as divider, 39-40; Nixonian tendencies of, 39; "near dictatorial" prerogatives of, 40; Pakistan and, 60; rhetorical skills of, 62; lost year of, 68-84; as oversimplifier-in-chief, 82; echo chamber inhabited by, 73, 78-81, 84
- Carrey**, Jim, as "rampaging id," 196
- Carville**, James, as homunculus, 196
- Castro**, Fidel, impending demise of, 62
- Chabon**, Michael, novelist, short attention span of, 185
- Cheney**, Dick, lapsed competence of, 70
- Cipriani Thorne**, Juan Luis, as Peruvian potential Pope, 59; as basketball star, 59
- Clarke**, Richard, unwelcome candor of, 71
- Clinton**, Bill, as Bush adviser, 39; as divided uniter, 40; as "Great Triangler," 179; as organic gardener, 198; DNA of, 206
- Cohen**, Katherine, admissions consultant, as "\$28,995 Tutor," 138; as "snake-oil salesman," 138
- Crick**, Francis, DNA don, as militant atheist, 206-207; as accidental pantheist, 207; as prospective pimp, 207
- Dale**, Stacy Berg, economist, on potential uselessness of elite education, 128-129
- Deacon**, Charles, Georgetown dean, as anti-"craziness" hardliner, 138; stingy wait-list maintained by, 122
- Edwards**, Elizabeth, as girl next door, 46; as Wendy's patron, 44
- Einstein**, Albert, as humanitarian, 188; as "Satanic imp," 188
- Eliot**, T. S., as "olde frostykings," 170
- Escobar**, Pablo, drug lord, cell-phone overages of, 99
- Flaubert**, Gustave, as poet, 180; as erotic landscaper, 179
- Calen**, Creek humour-ist, 196
- Giuliani**, Rudolph, perp walks and, 114; rumored loathing for Eliot Spitzer of, 110
- Gornick**, Vivian, sandpile of regret and, 173-174
- Granholt**, Jennifer, Michigan governor, as Democratic rising star, 108
- Grasso**, Richard, overcompensation of, 118
- Greene**, Graham, as dietitian, 196
- Hanauer**, Cathi, as "Bitch in the House," 165
- Hawking**, Stephen, as Emily Litella of theoretical astrophysics, 195
- Heinz Kerry**, Teresa, inoperative cookies of, 13; as tractor-pull debutante, 44; as "loose cannon," 44; exotic accent of, 44; as slumber-party mom, 46; as philanthropist, 48; as counter-heckler, 48
- Heinz**, H. John, late senator, as humble soup maker, 46
- Hikmet**, Nazim, unofficial poet laureate of Turkey, 191; as exile, 191
- Hussein**, Saddam, as once charismatic-seeming strongman, 193; demystification of, 100; as distraction, 68-84, 94
- Idema**, Jonathan "Jack," former Green Beret, as freelance anti-terrorism commando, 100; checkered past of, 100
- Jaruzelski**, Wojciech, Polish strongman, as potential post-Castro template, 62
- Jones**, Daniel, as "Bastard on the Couch," 165
- Kaczorowski**, John, labor leader, Methuselan eyes of, 116; on lost rosinness of Buffalo, 118
- Karzai**, Hamid, Afghan President, electoral prospects of, 13
- Kerry**, John, as divided uniter, 40; marital pants of, 44; as fine wine, 48
- Khan**, Abdul Qadeer, Pakistani nuclear scientist, as black-marketeer, 58
- Klemperer**, Victor, as Holocaust diarist, 106
- Klemperer**, Werner, as Colonel Klink, 106
- Langone**, Ken, Home Depot co-founder, as no Lloyd Bentsen, 118
- Leana**, Frank, admissions consultant, soothing Dick Cheney mien of, 136
- Lincoln**, Abraham, as fellow sufferer with Osama bin Laden, 90-91; poll-tested beard of, 110
- Lindsey**, Lawrence, former White House economic adviser, loose lips of, 70
- Litella**, Emily, on plight of Soviet jewelry, 195; on Puerto Rican steakhood, 195
- Lovejoy**, Reverend, *Simpsons* cleric, as papal long shot, 59
- Majors**, Lee, as ur-TV star, 106
- Mauldon**, Margaret, curiously casual Flaubert translator, 175-184; cracked kettledrums and, 182
- Montalban**, Ricardo, as generic Latin heartthrob, 106
- Moody**, William Vaughn, on perils of nineteenth-century outsourcing, 196
- Moore**, Roger, as bygone Bond, 103; as not Michael Moore, 103
- Morgan**, Charles, forgotten English novelist, as dim bulb, 175
- Musharraf**, Pervez, unsteady hand of, 58-60, 96; as assassination target, 59, 89, 96; as nuclear weak link, 58-60
- Pamuk**, Orhan, Turkish novelist, as Bush speechwriter, 188; as Kurdish-rights advocate, 188; heavy-handed playfulness of, 191-193
- Parkinson**, Norman, fashion revolutionary, as unbolter of beautiful knees, 161
- Patmore**, Coventry, Victorian poet, as champion of feminine self-sacrifice, 166; as poodle, 166
- Plath**, Sylvia, ominous blurb of, 170
- Poch**, Bruce, Pomona dean, colorful metaphors of, 137-140
- Poe**, Edgar Allan, deceptive non-brilliance of, 175
- Pope**, Laurence, diplomat, on Beltway monomania, 81; on broken crockery, 73
- Porter**, Cole, as biochemist, 207
- Powell**, Anthony, as elaborately unrevealing memoirist, 163; as difficult biography subject, 163
- Powell**, Colin, bureaucratic losing streak of, 70; golden rule of pre-emption as explicated by, 79
- Qutb**, Sayyid, as *jihadi* Lenin, 100
- Reagan**, Ronald, as divided uniter, 40; as de-federalizer, 112-115
- Roosevelt**, Theodore, as trust-buster, 112; as conservationist, 112; as man of labor, 112; contested legacy of, 112, 118
- Roth**, Philip, as wizard of id, 196
- Rumsfeld**, Donald, lapsed competence of, 70; transformation doctrine of, 76; memos of, 79, 84; tin mouth of, 84
- Scheuer**, Michael, CIA veteran, as "Anonymous," 80; as "Mike," 80; on dangerous myopia of "why they hate us," 82
- Schwarzenegger**, Arnold, as papal long shot, 59
- Shinseki**, Eric, retired general, unwelcome candor of, 71
- Smith**, Roger, former GM president, as Michael Moore *bête noire*, 103; as not James Bond, 103
- Spielberg**, Steven, as film-school reject, 130
- Spitzer**, Eliot, New York attorney general, as Democratic rising star, 108-118; balding virility of, 110; as "student-council weenie," 111; as Knicks fan, 111; as bastard child of Reagan, 114; as Moses, 108; as TR disciple, 112-115; minivan of, 110; as teenage wonk, 110; as trust-buster, 112-115; as Batman, 114
- Tolstoy**, Leo, carelessness of, 175
- Trevor**, William, as chronicler of teapot, toast, and turf, 185
- Van Ogtrop**, Kristin, real complicated home life of, 168; *Real Simple* work life of, 168
- Vremkin**, David, fictional Middle East historian, 148
- Waters**, Alice, organic entrepreneur, as presidential adviser, 198-199
- Watson**, Dwight, would-be tractor bomber, as "one-man weapon of mass destruction," 50; slapped wrist of, 50
- Wells**, H. G., as science-fiction Englishman, 103; as not George Orwell, 103
- Wolfowitz**, Paul, lapsed competence of, 70
- Woolf**, Virginia, as pre-dot-com Amazon, 171; *Atlantic* rejection of, 170; as "you-go girl," 171; ironic unfulfillment of, 171

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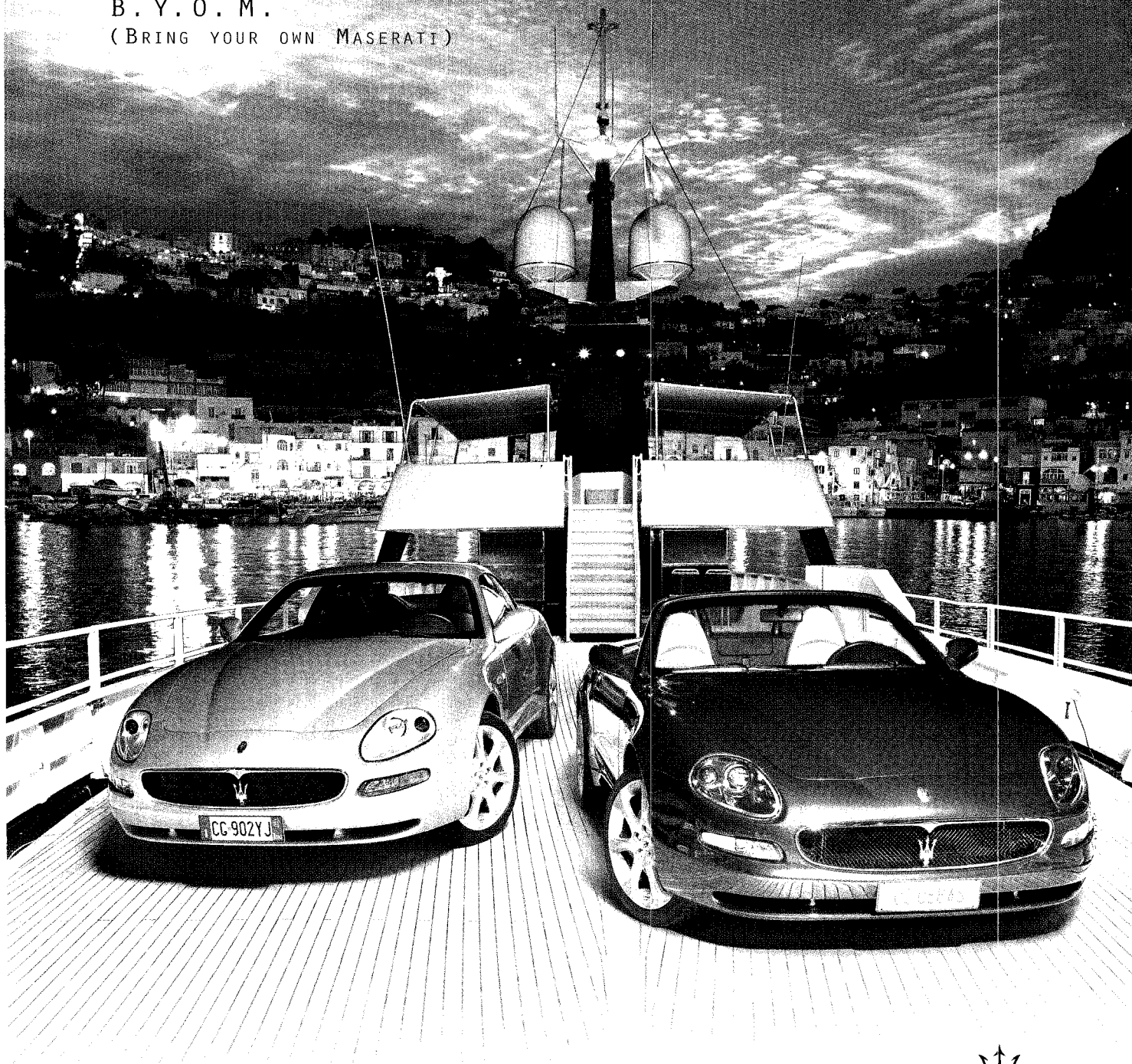


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